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FROM THE HUMAN END



WRITINGS BY  
L. P. JACKS, M.A., LL.D., D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD  
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14 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON, W.C. 2

SANTINIKETAN  
**FROM THE HUMAN  
END**

A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS

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14 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

1916



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# I

## FROM THE HUMAN END

IN every discussion which relates to the improvement of the world there are two methods of approach—the human and the scientific. As methods they are opposed ; but they have the same object, and each is necessary to the other.

The characteristic of the human method is that it takes the point of view of the people whose interests are under discussion. The scientific method, on the other hand, has a point of view of its own and maintains it resolutely.

The scientific method treats men objectively, and speaks of them as “others.” These “others” are the cannon-fodder of its theories, the *corpora vilia* of its experiments. It is concerned with *our* actions on *them*, and avoids the question of *their* reactions upon *us*. It firmly believes that men can be governed, and applies the rule of Law to all their affairs. It investigates duty—by which it means *our* duty to others ; and, having discovered what

our duty is, allows the others no right of appeal. I do my duty to you and you must put up with the duty as done by me. You may not like it; but just as I have overcome my inclinations in doing my duty, so you must overcome yours in submitting to what I do. You are an "other." The Germans, who are eminently scientific, reason in this manner.

The human method remembers that you are yourself. From your point of view it is I who am the "other" and not you. Indeed, the human method does not admit that any "others" exist. At least, it cannot find them. It can find persons—plenty of them; but "others" is the last word in language to express what persons really are. The word expresses what, in and for themselves, they are not. Thus the human method is a little irritated, at all events bewildered, by the attempts of the scientific method to define our duty to "others." It asks, "Where are they?" and it answers, "Nowhere."

Science thinks of men as units, counts them, adds them into totals, subtracts, multiplies, and divides. To every man it gives a number, by which henceforth he is to be known, his *name* being ignored. "The greatest happiness of the greatest *number*" exactly reveals the scientific mind. Of this formula and of all such, humanism can make nothing whatsoever. A man, it thinks, is not a unit to be handled by the Rule of Three, but a portent and an

astonishment, a queer being of whom you can never say what he will be after next. Science, seeking everywhere for law and order, finds a regularity in his queerness; humanism finds a queerness in his regularity. Science reduces his eccentricity to an average; to humanism the average itself is eccentric. "From all enumerations of the brethren, from all that reduces them to an average or adds them up into a mass, from all statistics of the saved and the lost, from all Government returns of virtue and vice, from all that measures our happiness in solid blocks or weighs it in tons avoirdupois—good Lord deliver us; and help us to know each son of man not by his number but by his Name." Such is the humanist prayer.

Unchecked by humanism, science would treat us all like patients in a Nursing Home where no drop of water may be given to cool our burning lips and no coverlet lifted from our fever-tortured bodies without written orders from the doctor in charge. Unchecked by science, humanism would treat us like guests in a hospitable mansion where we may eat and drink, work and wanton, as we please. Science, contemplating our misdemeanours, issues commands; humanism, entreaties; and great and high is the controversy between them as to the efficacy of the two methods. The controversy echoes through the ages and is the starting-point of deep lines of division



between religions, philosophies, civilisations. Humanism, quoting St Paul, affirms that the well-known tendency of mankind to flout the Ten Commandments is largely due to the dictatorial language in which these are presented. Science, quoting Immanuel Kant, pays its homage to "thou shalt," and maintains with perfect logic that, were this phrase omitted, the Ten Commandments could not be *obeyed* at all. Give science its way, and every moral code would acquire a tenfold stringency. Humanism is alarmed at the prospect, believing that the tenfold stringency would provoke a tenfold disobedience. "Let us abolish 'thou shalt,'" it cries, "and substitute 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.'"

The difference might be otherwise expressed by saying that the scientific method begins by giving you a penny: the human begins by asking if you would *like* a penny. Both aim at doing you good. Both desire your co-operation. But the scientific defines for you the form your co-operation must take, while the human leaves you free to choose the form for yourself. The scientific says, "If I offer you a penny, you must co-operate by taking it; otherwise I cannot do you good." The human says, "If I offer you a penny, you will please decide for yourself whether you will take it or no." When Mr Lloyd George offered the working men "fourpence for threepence" and

then compelled them to take the penny, he was true to the scientific method, which is not averse to a partnership with those whom it seeks to benefit, provided always that itself remains the predominant partner. The human method, on the contrary, enters into the bargain on equal terms. The scientific allows you the right of self-defence only against the people who want to do you harm. The human allows, in addition, the right of self-defence against the people who want to do you good. The first is the more consistent, the second the more generous.

From this it follows that science tends to cultivate morals, while humanism tends to cultivate manners. By manners I do not mean mere politeness. I mean the kind of manners described in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians—the manners which are morals touched with imagination. These are more than mere politeness. At the same time it must be admitted that science is frequently impolite. Rude and dictatorial elements are bound to appear, sooner or later, in the method which runs to morals exclusively. Is there not something insulting about every conclusion which takes the form of “thou shalt”? Who would care to belong to a club where he was always treated as one of “the others” and his behaviour controlled by a committee of wiseacres? Who would care to live in a world where the only refuge from benevolent

tyranny was to join oneself to the ranks of the tyrants?

True to its manners, humanism never presses a reform upon men without first consulting them as to whether this is the particular reform they want. From the human end no reform is really such unless it be wanted by those to whom it is offered. Science concedes the same point, but withdraws the concession by insisting that people do not know what they want, and by claiming the right to inform them. Thus science recovers the whip-hand, and makes up its mind as to what is best for "others" without consulting them. Its consultations with the people are *ex post facto* proceedings undertaken when its own mind has been made up. They are not in the form of a question, "Do you want this?" but of a categorical statement, "This is what you want." It follows that science, though it believes in government, is friendly to democratic government only when suffered to dictate the terms of the friendship. The expert must decide.

Humanism is profoundly sceptical as to every form of government, and would, if unchecked, make anarchists of all men. To science, as we have seen, government is an idol, nay, a very god. But the government must be its own creation, and none but itself must be suffered to govern. Science makes its god in its own image.

In the form of its expression humanism is dramatic ; science is historical. To humanism even thought is a dialogue ; to science it is a privately conducted process—"the process of thought." As in well-written dramas there are no "others," but only selves, individuals, each standing in his own right—whether it be the drunken porter cursing behind the gate, or the philosopher meditating suicide,—so in humanism no man, no thought, no thing, can be rightly apprehended unless it be taken primarily at its own valuation. To take it so is to see it playing its part, and playing that part in its own way ; and from the interaction of all the parts arises the great Drama of the world. The difference between this and science is the difference between Shakespeare and a prose summary of Shakespeare's plays.

It is obvious that the world would be in a sad state if either side were left in exclusive possession of the field. In the one event there would be intolerable confusion ; in the other intolerable tyranny. Nothing therefore would be gained by the final overthrow of either side by the other. On the contrary, what we should most desire is that both sides may continue to gain in determination and strength. Just as the finest sport is seen when the two sides in a game are strong and evenly matched, so in philosophy the clearest lights are those which arise from the fiercest opposition. To whichever side we belong, let us rejoice in

the stubbornness and ability with which our opponents are playing the game. To produce the best results the opposition must not merely exist: it must be as intense as possible. The humanism which injures science destroys its own tools. The science which injures humanism weakens its own inspiration.

Perhaps the two are better compared to men working from opposite ends of a tunnel. Let each party listen for the sound of the other's picks. There will be a current of fresh air when they meet.

The value of everything in life depends on a certain admixture with its opposite—and to this principle we shall often return. There never was a perfectly white soul which had not a black one in its ancestry. The interbreeding of white with white leads to degeneration as surely as the interbreeding of black with black. So it need not surprise us that the ultimate relation of humanism and science is that of beings who hate and love each other at the same time—the most fruitful relation of all. They hate one another as rivals. They love one another as rivals *for the light*.

## II

### AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

THIS question, like another also asked amid tragic circumstances, received no answer from the Person to whom it was addressed.

Since it was Cain who asked the question, the inference has been drawn, most impudently, that all men who answer in the negative belong to the tribe of Cain. The negative answer has come to be regarded as one of the characteristic marks of a bad man—in fact, the very brand of Cain. Contrariwise, the acceptance of the position of keeper to one's brother is usually taken as an unequivocal sign of grace.

There is, however, a third position: that of the people who maintain that the question cannot be answered except by a compromise between the two parties concerned—my brother and I. Who would be guilty of the greater impudence—my brother in asserting his right to be kept by me, or I in asserting

the right to keep my brother? If ever there was a question which required a compromise for answer, it is surely the question of Cain. The attempt to answer it without compromise is responsible for social unrest, political struggles, and for many of, if not all, the great wars of history. These, in the last analysis, turn upon the question, "Who shall be keeper and who shall be kept?"—the question left unanswered by the Person to whom it was originally addressed.

The same holds true of many great systems of morality and of the warfare of ideals which results from their differences. They represent one-sided, uncompromising answers to Cain's question. The side most usually taken is that of the would-be keeper of his brethren. The position of the brethren, after they have passed into this gentleman's hands, is seldom considered.

One of these systems, for example, requires me to make the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number the aim of my conduct. But who made me a competent judge of what the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number really is? Must the Greatest Number submit to my ruling? Have they no right of appeal from my judgment? Must they accept for their happiness what I, speaking in the name of my philosophy, decree to be such? Would the Greatest Number be exceeding their rights if they told me that *their*

notion of their Greatest Happiness required me, first and foremost, to mind my own business and leave theirs alone? Should we not have to compromise? Or suppose the Greatest Number were to turn the tables on me and insist on taking *my* Greatest Happiness under their control? I can think of no prospect more appalling. Again we should have to compromise.

Another uncompromising morality is that of Kant. Kant instructs me so to act that the principle of my action may be law for all mankind. In the smallest of my actions I am to play the part of keeper to the whole mass of my brethren—I am, indeed, to legislate for the universe. In all of which Kant shows not the faintest sympathy with the unfortunate universe for which I am legislating. When I legislate for the universe, let no dog bark, let no mouse squeak! Has the world ever seen impudence so colossal or pedantry so foolish? Imagine a state of society in which every member was engaged in the congenial occupation of laying down “law universal,” according to his own interpretation thereof—and what other interpretation would be possible? Every man would then become a little Germany, imposing his *Kultur* on all the other little Germanies, and calling high heaven to witness that no other *Kultur* was worth a fig. It is quite untrue to say that Germany has proved faithless to the philosophy of Kant. She is



faithful beyond all others. She has answered Cain's question in the affirmative and without compromise. She has answered it from the point of view of the keeper (who is herself). Kant answered it in the same way.

It is a noteworthy circumstance that the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" appears to have been raised by Cain only. This has given rise to the prejudice that the question is one which can be asked only by men of the stamp of Cain. *But why was it not asked by Abel also?* There were even better reasons for Abel asking it in regard to Cain than for Cain asking it in regard to Abel; and it is characteristic of our onesidedness in dealing with the question that this matter has been so commonly overlooked. Was the duty of "keeping the brother," then, all on one side? Was Abel under no obligation to look after the morals of this murderous-minded man? The fact that the question occurred to Cain and evidently troubled his conscience, while, on the other hand, it appears not to have occurred to Abel and never troubled his conscience at all, seems to me a point in favour of the much-maligned character of the elder brother. I begin to suspect that Abel was something of a prig. Had the imagination of mankind been equally impressed by Abel's neglect to look after his erring brother as by the erring brother's neglect to look after him, a great prejudice would have been avoided,

and the whole course of civilisation, to say nothing of moral philosophy, might have been different in consequence.

Taking the point of view of those who assert the right to be their brother's keeper, I fail to see how, after condemning Cain, we can, consistently, let Abel go scot-free. We are clearly entitled to say to him, "Abel, you appear to have been too much occupied with the cultivation of your own virtue. Why did you allow this dangerous brother of yours to go to the dogs? You are much to blame. Moreover, your blood is upon your own head. Had you brought the proper influence to bear upon him, had you taken measures to wean him from his evil ways, he would never have murdered you. He would have repented and become at least as good a man as yourself, who needed no repentance." Has there not been some inconsistency at this point? Have we not forgotten that the relation of the two brothers was reciprocal? Can better reasons be given why Cain should be the keeper of Abel than why Abel should be the keeper of Cain? True, Cain was the elder brother; but then, as a set-off against this, Abel was the Lord's favourite.

But here a new problem arises. If we suppose each of the two asserting his right to be the keeper of the other, Cain because he was the elder, Abel because he was the more favoured man, shall we not place them both

in a dilemma? Would there not be a danger of the two coming to blows over this very question—who is to be the keeper of the other? Would not the situation thus created be entirely after the heart of the militarists and wholly unacceptable to the pacifists?

And is it not true that this difficulty, if sufficiently weighed, would cause much that has been written about morality to be modified or withdrawn altogether? For example, Kant's doctrine that the only unconditionally good thing in the universe is the good-will? Precisely; but who is to determine in a given cause what the good-will is? Cain and Abel, in the situation supposed, are at loggerheads over its interpretation. There is a double contradiction. Each claims to keep the other; each refuses to be kept by the other. Both the claim and the refusal are made in the name of the good-will. Obviously an interpreter is required to settle the conflict.

There is another way of expressing the same difficulty. We arrive at it, as before, by putting ourselves in Abel's position as well as in Cain's. Let us suppose that Cain had been a moralist after the heart of Kant. "This brother of mine," he would then have reasoned, "is a fellow I do not like. I disapprove of his way of life as a keeper of flocks, which makes him a capitalist and a huckster, and tends to commercial speculation. Moreover, his bloody sacrifices of sheep and lambs appear to me

disgusting. I feel a constant inclination to knock him on the head. But in the name of duty I will overcome this inclination ; I will look after him ; I will guard his interests ; I will be his keeper." So says Cain.

But now what of Abel? He, we may suppose, knows nothing of Cain's reasoning, and submits with a little surprise, perhaps, and an occasional outburst of irritation, to Cain's benevolent interference with his affairs. But presently the secret comes out. Cain commits the indiscretion of writing a book in which he expounds his morality. Or in an unguarded moment he informs Abel, with exquisite bad taste, that he is looking after him not because he loves him, but because he regards it as his duty so to act. Or Abel, being a man of high spirit and of keen perceptions, finds out the truth for himself, or gets wind of it from a neighbour. What follows? Trouble, surely. Is there anything in this world which so rouses the indignation of a self-respecting man as the discovery that another man is presuming "to do him good" not from love, not from personal affection, but from a cold-blooded sense of duty? Put yourself in the position not of the keeper but of the brother who is being kept on these terms. Would you like it? Would you accept it? Would you not say, "The position is quite intolerable—humiliating—disgusting! This fellow dislikes me, hates me, would be glad if I were out of

existence, and yet forces himself in the name of his duty to look after my interests—to do me good! What does he know of my interests? What *can* he know, hating me as he does? The prig! The monster! Let him go to the devil!” This is what you would answer. And, looking at the matter from the human end, I cannot see that you would be wrong.

A sycophant, a toady, a sponge, knowing on which side his bread was buttered, would answer differently. A man at his last gasp, accepting Cain's benevolence as a lesser evil than extinction, would answer differently.

But “the masses” and “the poor,” the brothers whom it is “our” duty to keep, are neither sycophants, nor toadies, nor sponges, nor are all of them at the last gasp. And I think that those who know the life of these people from within would bear me witness that an answer not unlike that outlined above is often very near to their lips. They resent the control of their destinies by classes or persons who profess to know what is good for them better than they know themselves. They are suspicious of the well-educated, who claim to be their keepers. They will never suffer themselves to be “kept” to the tune of anybody's moral sense. They will never become the passive instruments of anybody's social theory. They will trust themselves only to those who love them. Individualists

and socialists, take note! Experts and doctrinaires, be warned in time!

Before any man can play the part of keeper to any other man a simple condition has to be fulfilled. The other man must be *down*—on his back. He must be down in his self-respect, in his morals—a sycophant, a toady, a sponge. Or he must be down in his luck. If the other man is not down already either in morals or luck, then his would-be keeper must knock him down, must trample on him, must take the spirit and manhood out of him—an odd way of beginning to do him good, though not infrequently practised by benevolent tyrants.

A good example of all this is afforded, on the national scale, by Germany. Germany ought to be considered a model State by all those who give an affirmative answer to the question of Cain. Her position is quite clear. In her own mind she is fully convinced that she has the right and the duty to be keeper of her sister nations. This is the point on which all her professors are agreed—for example, Professor Eucken, who knows better, and Professor Edouard Meyer, who doesn't. She feels no obligation to consult the other nations as to whether they wish to be kept by her, for, like every superior person who legislates for the ignorant masses, she knows what is good for them better than they know themselves. She hates these other nations in vary-

ing degrees of intensity : by her own confession she hates them. But, true to the Kantian spirit, her hatred for other nations, her wish that they were out of existence, only serves to rouse her sense of duty into action—her duty being to set these hated nations right, and so to do them good. A noted pastor recently preaching in Munich is reported to have defined the attitude of Germany almost in these very words. Magnificent self-abnegation !

The other nations, however, knowing that she hates them, are, of course, not inclined to regard her as the best judge of their interests. They distrust her ability to do them good, the allusion to “duty” only serving to deepen the grounds of distrust otherwise disclosed. And they have given Germany to understand in unmistakable language that they have no desire to be “kept” by her. But all this makes no difference to Germany’s mind, except to harden it in the assertion of its “duty.” This brings Germany at a single step to the essential condition named above—namely, that before you can do your duty to your brother nation in this way you must knock him down, you must have him on his back. That is, before you can keep him securely, you must first reduce him to a condition in which he is hardly worth keeping except as a slave—though of course the contents of his pocket may be well worth appropriating, as Germany has found them in Belgium.

Thus the present war might be defined as a conflict raised by the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The Allies represent the cause of the brother who, for good reasons, refuses to be kept by Germany or, for the matter of that, by anybody else. Germany represents the self-appointed keeper, believing himself, for bad reasons, to be the organ of the Kantian good-will.

We may, perhaps, summarise the discussion by saying that when the question is raised, "Am I my brother's keeper?" mere morals answer "Yes," but good manners answer "No." The German says, "I am my brother's keeper; it is my duty; and whoever refuses to let me do my duty I will shoot." The Frenchman would rather shoot himself than make the original proposition. Such being the difference, may we not say without hesitation that in this matter good manners are bound to prevail? When they have prevailed they will make that compromise with morals in which wisdom consists.



### III

## ORGANISATION IN TARTARUS

IN our dealings with the problem of evil we are all, perhaps, more inclined than is permissible to overcome our difficulties by the process of "killing evil with our mouths." Some have carried this process to the length of asserting that evil is null and naught. But this leaves us asking, "Why then does evil give so much trouble? If it be null and naught it would not be difficult to resist. Indeed, it would not need resisting at all." Others, appreciating this difficulty, have admitted the existence of evil, but demonstrated its inferiority, as a fighting power, to the good. Their arguments might be compared with those which have been so abundant in the press since the outbreak of the present war, in which we are assured, for our consolation, that the strength of Germany has within it seeds of weakness, and that the ultimate victory of the Allies is assured in consequence: argu-

ments which may be theoretically sound, but to which we should not like Sir Douglas Haig or Admiral Jellicoe to pay too much attention.

A better comparison might be made with a hypothetical case. Suppose that in the midst of our alarm at the damage done by the drinking of ardent spirits some person should seek to allay our fears by the assurance that there is no such thing as pure whisky, that all whisky, even the strongest, is diluted and weakened by the presence in it of a certain percentage of water. This, we should say, is true, but makes no difference to the matter under discussion. Our interest in whisky is not that of chemists, to whom the fact mentioned would make a difference: it is that of moralists. To us, as moralists, whisky is only a name for that which does the mischief, and the mischief is not affected by the discovery of water in the cause. In the same way there may be no such thing as pure evil: all evil may be diluted with good; none the less it is the diluted article that does the mischief. In the former case, moreover, what impresses us as moralists is not that the whisky is purified by its admixture with water, but that the water is poisoned by its admixture with whisky. In the same way with the mixture of evil and good. It is a *bad* mixture.

Another way of killing evil with the mouth is to say that it lacks the power of organisa-

tion. The good is that whose very nature is to organise itself, and so become stronger; its parts unite by natural affinities and thus produce ever more powerful combinations. Evil, on the other hand, is dispersive, and in constant danger of internal disruption; its interests are inconsistent, its aims chaotic, its tendencies all at sixes and sevens; and the consequence is that evil is always weakening itself from within.

This, again, may be true; but it rather increases our wonder that evil, after thus weakening itself from within for so many ages, should still remain as strong as we find it to-day. It is certain that the process, by which good tends to unite and organise and evil to break up and disperse, has not yet gone sufficiently far to make an appreciable difference in the intensity of the conflict between good and evil. For a power whose nature is self-destructive it must be confessed that evil, from its own point of view, is still, at the end of the ages, going strong and doing remarkably well. And must it not also be admitted that good, for a power whose nature is to organise and increase itself automatically, is not doing quite as well as one might expect under the circumstances?

I believe, for reasons with which I shall not now weary the reader, that when the history of the conflict between heaven and hell comes to its last chapter, it will be found that the

secret of organisation lies with heaven and not with hell. But this is a very different thing from saying that hell, or evil, has no genius for organisation, and is, in fact, a mere chaos, or mass of disruptive tendencies. It seems to me that the conflict is not waged between two powers one of which is by nature organised and the other by nature disorganised. The conflict is waged between two totally different kinds of organisation, and the object of the strife is, precisely, to decide *which* type of organisation shall prevail. The organisation of evil is mechanical: the organisation of good is vital. But this is not to say that at every stage of the conflict the mechanical is weaker, and the vital stronger.

Far from evil having no gift for organisation, the strength of evil lies in its extraordinary genius for organising itself after its own fashion. Because of that fashion evil is evil; because of its genius for the fashion evil is formidable. Indeed, it is, at all times, much easier for evil to organise itself in the evil way than for good to organise itself in the good way. The organisation of heaven, on the other hand, being of the higher type, is the more difficult to attain. The troubles of heaven mainly come from this very fact—that it encounters in hell an organisation, not superior indeed to its own, but far more completely developed for its own purpose. The children of this world are wiser *in their generation* than the

children of light—and they are wiser because the development of their organisation, for the business of the sort of world in which they have chosen to live, is more advanced.

This, if true, is most assuredly important. Believing, as most of us now believe, that organisation is the supreme task of human society, it behoves us to discriminate, lest by ill chance we should stumble upon the kind of organisation for which evil has a peculiar genius, and by which it attains its maximum of efficiency as evil. In nothing is hell so formidable as in the pretensions it puts forward to be the Model State—that is, the most complete organisation of thinking beings now extant in the universe. These pretensions are so many, so alluring, and so well argued, that they may deceive, and often do deceive, the very elect. Let us not forget that hell, just because it is hell, *believes itself* to be the Model State, and is able to justify the claim, not without show of reason, by pointing on the one hand to its own magnificent organisation, and on the other to the relatively imperfect order displayed by heaven. Seduced by this contrast, the apostles of organisation, even the best-intentioned, are always in danger of falling into the nethermost pit. Let us therefore be on our guard!

That we may be able to identify the kind of organisation for which evil has a genius, let us briefly enumerate a few of its distinguish-

ing marks. Suppose some modern explorer of the realms of the spirit were permitted to visit the lower world and return to the light of day, what would he report? I imagine his report would contain the following, amid a mass of other information.

“In no part of the universe,” he would say, “has the philosophy of the State been so profoundly studied and its principles so consistently applied as in hell. All the inhabitants, from Beelzebub himself down to the most insignificant of the devils and the humblest of lost souls, are thoroughly familiar with the conception of the State. They live under its constant shadow; they adjust their business to its requirements and obey its behests with instant and unquestioning obedience. The State has superseded all other conceptions of the nature and end of the common life. Whereas in other realms you hear of the ‘tribes’ of the blessed, or the ‘kingdom’ of heaven, or the moral ‘government’ of the world, in hell all these terms—tribes, kingdom, government—have been utterly discarded in favour of ‘the State’—the one and only ideal which ensures the utmost co-ordination of individual effort and gives the maximum driving power to the pursuit of the Worst. This it is, of which the inhabitants from top to bottom are proudest. Coupled with pride in their own achievement, they have the greatest contempt for the haphazard, disorderly

way in which the Best is cultivated in other realms. They look upon the civilisation of heaven as less advanced, less intelligent, less efficient than their own—in fact, as a thoroughly retrograde type of civilisation. And they mean to destroy it.

“Hell is the most highly organised State in the universe; the greatest of all the Great Powers of earth is a mere beginner in comparison. Nowhere else has the reconciliation of the State and the individual been so completely effected. The Hell-State is the hell-individual ‘writ large.’ It is the larger mind of each of its citizens, which explains him to himself and prescribes the end of all his actions—the extension, enrichment, and development of his private consciousness, and the interpreter of his private will. On the other hand, each individual devil is the incarnation or working-epitome of All Hell; he goes into action with the concentrated essence of evil at his back. The humblest devil knows his station and his duties, and, by accepting both as obligations imposed by the State, his conduct expresses at every moment the total depravity of the whole system to which he belongs.

“There is no disorder anywhere. Nothing is left to chance. Nothing is done without method, science, forethought. The hand of the expert is everywhere in evidence. From the system of Higher Education down to the

arrangements for heating the Lake of Fire, everything is controlled by a sublimated extract from the massed brains of the whole population of devils, operating through the delicate and responsive machinery of the State. It is not brains merely that rule, but the kind of brains which come into action when the ablest of horned foreheads put themselves *together* for a common cause.

“The Dante of 1300 would hardly recognise the place under its modern improvements. He would be astonished at the enhanced efficiency of evil brought about by adopting a dynamic instead of a static conception of the Hell-State. He would rewrite his *Inferno* from beginning to end. In his time the master-mind was chained down at the bottom of the pit. Now he is at large, the trusted head of the community, and his venerated portrait hangs on every wall. Instead of being the rough-and-tumble place it once was, its inhabitants imperfectly acquainted with one another, and the communications from circle to circle of the most tedious and primitive kind, hell has now become a network of interrelated parts, with a system of communications absolutely perfect. Torture itself has been methodised. Every square yard of the Lake of Fire is under the charge of a trained excruciator, who plunges his pain-gauge into the substance of the spirits and daily tabulates results. So thorough, too, is the system of education that



even the little devils kill their flies scientifically and in the name of the State.

“Needless to say, the patriotism of the devils is entire: not one of them all but believes in hell, and in its mission as a conquering power, with the full fervour of his soul. They love and they hate as one. Both love and hate are thoroughly organised, so that either or both are ready to break out with irresistible fury at a moment’s notice, whenever the service of the Worst so requires. They make an especial point of *understanding* the objects both of their love and of their hate. ‘To get a thing into your power,’ they say, ‘you must first understand its nature. How, for example, could we ever hope to outwit the Best, unless we understood it?’ The consequence is that all the devils are great moralists. And their morality, of course, is homogeneous.”

## IV

### THE STATE AS THE STERILISER OF VIRTUE

“It is only as a member of the State that a man can live the good life.” This doctrine, which is widely current at the present day—its originator was Aristotle,—is true. But logically it is compatible with another proposition which has a very different ring: “It is only as a member of the State that a man can live the bad life.” A hypothetical man cut off from all human relations would be incapable of virtue. But, for the same reasons, he would be equally incapable of vice. To be capable of either virtue or vice he must be a member of “the State.”

Those who concentrate on the first proposition without attention paid to the second tell us that they are not referring to any actual State, but to the “ideal” State, the State as it exists for reason. As members of the ideal State we are in relations favourable to virtue and unfavourable to vice. Now this also may be

true. But unfortunately it does not help us very far: indeed, it leaves the difference between virtue and vice an open question. For there is no agreement as to what the "ideal" State is, nor as to how exactly it differs from actual States which are not ideal. Hence each of the actual States is apt to put forward the claim that its own institutions represent the ideal more fully than the institutions of its neighbours; and the claim, if pushed far enough, leads to conditions such as those now existing in Europe. Thus the assertion that the good life is the life of a citizen of the ideal State, far from providing a sure criterion of virtue and vice, only serves to shift the seat of the controversy and to threaten bloody wars.

Whether membership of the State helps or hinders the good life seems to depend on the kind of State to which we belong. Thus a man whose object was to live the best kind of life would find the most favourable conditions in membership of the best kind of State. But a man—or rather, a devil—whose object was to live the worst kind of life would be most likely to succeed in the worst kind of State. And there is no denying that the distinction between best and worst exists among States just as it does amongst individuals.

Indeed, when States are in question the distinction between the good and the bad is, as Mr Bosanquet would say, extended, writ

large, and reinforced. If it be plain that there are sheep and goats among individuals, is it not still plainer that there are sheep and goats among States? No doubt a goat-State is a much bigger, more imposing, more highly bred and rigorously selected animal than a goat-individual; but that does not turn it into a sheep.

This may seem too obvious to need stating. But, unless I am much mistaken, there is a tendency in the modern philosophy of the State, derived for the most part from German sources, to obliterate the distinction between sheep and goats when the State is in question. Mr Bosanquet illustrates this tendency in England, just as Treitschke, with quite other objects in view, illustrates it in Germany. Mr Bosanquet maintains the doctrine that the ideal State expresses and reveals "the Real Will" of the individual. But since the ideal State itself has not yet been revealed,—the Utopians being all at variance and actual States at war over this very question—we are left just as deeply in the dark as to the nature of our Real Will as we were before this doctrine was propounded. There is no philosophy of the State in existence at the present moment which can provide any of us with an answer to the question whether we, for our part, belong ~~to~~ the sheep or the goats.

As Mr Bosanquet's views form an illuminating contrast to my own, I must linger over them a moment longer. The State, he main-

tains, is the individual mind extended, "writ large," and reinforced by the driving power of the Common Will. This at once tempts us to ask, What is gained by "writing large," etc., an individual mind, if it happens to be an evil mind to begin with? What is needed, one would think, is to write the evil mind as small as possible, and to avoid everything by which it is extended or reinforced. But Mr Bosanquet thinks otherwise. The effect of extending the individual mind through the institutions of the State is, he explains, to make it a better mind, the "extension" effected by the State revealing to the man (or mind) that what he is *really* aiming at is something higher than he thinks. The example given is that of the sensualist. The sensualist *thinks* he is after women; and so, we may add, think all his neighbours, the women especially. But all that is an imperfect view of what the man is after, and it is the function of the State to bring this home to the man. This it does through the institution of family life. By virtue of that institution the man discovers that what he *really* wanted all the time he thought he was after women was to find himself the father of a happy and devoted family. This is what Mr Bosanquet calls extending his mind or revealing to him his Real Will.

But surely it amounts to providing him with a new mind and a new will altogether. You

may write lust as "large" as you like, but that will not make it into devoted family love. A man is not cured of a squint by enlarging his face. A blackguard is not turned into a gentleman by extending his mind and reinforcing his will: he is simply turned into a bigger blackguard than before. A community of thieves do not of necessity become honest by organising themselves as a State; they may become more formidable thieves—as experience has often proved. The covetousness of individual Germans is not converted into the love of mankind by the German State; it is converted into the lust of world-dominion, which, properly speaking, is not a conversion at all, but a mere reproduction of the original vice on a larger scale.

And so it must ever be. The State, regarded as the "extension of the individual mind" (I do not so regard it myself), can be nothing other than an enlarged copy of the mingled virtues and vices of its members. If the virtues preponderate, the extension and reinforcement will be all to the good. If the vices preponderate, the extension and reinforcement will be all to the bad. Bad men do ill by organising themselves into States: good men do well. To treat the State, as the school of *Mr* Bosanquet does, as though it were an instrument of which the Good only can make use, seems to me, I must confess, to be flying in the face of the most obvious facts. If on

the one hand the State is the most potent of God's weapons—which I do not dispute,—on the other it is the most potent of the devil's. Neither side has a monopoly of this mighty engine of war—and of peace.

In general, therefore, we may say that all this assertion of the right of the State to determine our morality or to interpret us to ourselves provides no key to the solution of our moral problems; for it still leaves us asking *which* State, or which type of State, the British, the German, the Mexican, or the Turkish? In each of these we should find ourselves differently interpreted to ourselves and provided with a different morality. All we mean by best and worst, and by everything that lies between, is represented in these differences. It is surely no philosophical answer to tell us that we should accept as final the will of the State in which we happen to be born. That would leave our criterion of right and wrong a pure matter of accident.

I do not deny the possibility that by adequate discussion men might come to mutual agreement as to what the ideal State, which promotes only the good life in its members, really is, and so settle this controversy once and for all. But then it is no easier to find the perfect form of the State than to find the perfect form of the individual. Most of us, I imagine, would find the problem of defining the ideal individual, or man, less perplexing than the problem

of defining the ideal State. Be that as it may, I cannot see that anything is gained either in ease or clearness or cogency by treating morality in terms of the State, and not in terms of the individual. True, the individual and the State cannot be understood apart from one another. But it does not follow that they are immediately understood when we put them together.

Indeed, to many of us who look at this matter from the human end, the individual, when considered as a member of the State, far from becoming intelligible, becomes more incomprehensible than ever. We observe that the effect of his relations to the State is to transform his character in a way we cannot understand. In some instances the transformation is one which makes a wholly favourable impression on the moral sense—we see the selfish man becoming heroic, the sluggard strenuous, the fool wise. But in other instances we see a contrary order of effects. Persons whom we had learned to respect in their private capacity, and indeed accepted as lights on the way of life, seem suddenly to drop all their best characteristics when they come before us as members of the particular State to which they happen to belong. Outside their State relations they seemed to us adorned with virtues; inside, they shed these virtues and take on the opposite qualities. We are thinking, of course, of certain Germans.



The Dr Harnack I respect is the famous Biblical critic. The Dr Harnack I do not respect is the person who signed the manifesto of the German Professors. In the first character I encounter Dr Harnack outside his relations to the German State; in the second I encounter him inside. And the change seems to me a change for the worse. The State has done Dr Harnack no good, but harm. Outside his State-relation he displays a fine moral perception and a critical faculty of extraordinary power; inside, his critical faculty disappears and his moral sense becomes blunted. This, from the point of view of the theory under consideration, leaves Dr Harnack a mystery. Were it true that the State is the individual writ large, Dr Harnack's good qualities should grow in proportion as he identifies himself with the State to which he belongs. We see that they do nothing of the kind.

By these and such-like things our faith in the doctrine that the State, by its nature, is something higher and more enlightened than the individual, has been sorely shaken. Admitting, if only for the sake of argument, that the State is that which interprets the individual to himself, it seems to us poor humanists that some actual States fulfil this function in the most inadequate, unsatisfactory, and dangerous manner. What they do, indeed, is to misinterpret the individual to himself—witness the case of Dr Harnack. We would appeal to

all individuals to be on their guard against the interpretation of themselves which the State offers them. Some of these interpretations are clearly falsehoods, due to ignorance and stupidity on the part of the State. Others are traps due to cunning and malignity. Pending the arrival of the ideal State, which is a long way off; pending even agreement as to what the ideal State is (also a long way off), we should all be well advised in severely criticising any interpretation the State offers of our "Real Will" before allowing it to become the basis of our conduct. Otherwise we may wake up some fine morning to find ourselves the partners of thieves and the accomplices of cutthroats.

One of the most perplexing problems of life, to which psychology has so far provided no clue, relates to the effects produced by the pooling or combination of human qualities —of which the democratic State is the supreme instance. One might expect that the character of the pool, or combination, would always correspond to the character of the elements of which it is composed: so that a combination of virtues, for example, would always be a virtuous combination; a combination of vices, a vicious combination; a parliament of wise men, a wise parliament; a committee of fools, a foolish committee. But experience proves that this simple formula is by no means always applicable. Of course, if one could

get the elements pure, the formula would probably work: the combination of virtues would probably be virtuous, and so on; but this never happens. A tiny drop of vice gets in, and that drop may poison a whole ocean of virtues; or a grain of commonsense makes its appearance in a committee of fools and instantly turns their folly into highest wisdom. At all events, the effect of combining human qualities, or human individuals, is never to produce a mere sum total of the force those qualities or individuals represent. It is always to produce a force of a *different* kind, acting in a *different* direction from that indicated by the separate units. The new force thus created may be higher and more effective; or it may be lower and less effective. A community consisting of a hundred wise men may display in their joint action a degree of intelligence vastly less than that possessed by any one of the individual members. A community of plain men, on the other hand, may hit out a line of action which only the highest genius could conceive. It is the same with morality. Parliaments of conscience have been the parents of many crimes, the memory of which has left the virtuous M.P.'s thoroughly ashamed of themselves for the rest of their lives. And cases have been known in which professional villains, met for the concoction of mischief, have ended by passing a resolution in favour of the Moral Law.

Now there are some States which act in the one way, and there are some which act in the other. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that a State, merely because it is a State, is wiser or better than its individual members. It may be the reverse, and that to any conceivable degree. The State represented by Cromwell was probably on a higher level than the average of Englishmen in that day, and ennobled those who belonged to it. The State represented by Charles II was on a lower level, and degraded those who belonged to it. The British State seems to be ennobling its members at the present moment. I doubt if it was doing so two years ago; certainly not in the same degree.

The State, then, is not above criticism. The desirable condition is not that of being member in a State, but that of being member in the right kind of State. Some are thoroughly bad. Indeed, the worst things now extant under the sun are precisely these bad States; and it has always been so. Anarchy itself is preferable to their cutthroat organisation.

Were I to learn that at this moment some German, with his eye upon England—as mine is on Germany—were writing about us in exactly the same strain as that above, I should not withdraw one line that I have written. I should hail the German as helping me to prove my case.

## V

# THE UNDATED MILLENNIUM

ONE of the strangest by-products of the doctrine of evolution is the cult—I can use no other term—which has grown up round the words “slow and gradual.” I call it strange because it is out of keeping with the general characteristics of modern life. In all that concerns our practical interests we cultivate speed: our object is to “get there” in the shortest possible time. Moralists also are constantly deploring the furious rate at which we live. Is it not strange that in the midst of this orgy of speed men should be willing to see something divine in the slow and gradual ways of evolution? Is it not strange that the saying, “The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small,” should have been revived, and be so often quoted with approval, in an age which is exerting itself so strenuously to make its own mills grind with the utmost conceivable rapidity? What a damaging comment on the doctrine that “man makes God in his own image”! Could any deity be

more unlike to the modern man than this God of the slow-grinding mills ! What have Birmingham, Sheffield, and Manchester to do with the worship of a Being whose mills grind slowly ? I once heard a sermon in which the preacher solemnly quoted this saying about the mills of God and later on spoke with admiration of the invention of high-speed steel. Was that consistent ?

There is no reason why improvement in a well-ordered universe should not be slow, though, it must also be confessed, there is no reason why it should. However, let us grant that slowness is imposed on evolution by causes inherent in the nature of things : in other words, that a universe with a rapid history is somehow an absurdity or a contradiction in terms. It still remains to point out that of slowness, as of quickness, there are many degrees. All snails do not creep at the same pace. One snail might take half an hour in crawling across my window pane ; another might take a whole day, or conceivably a hundred years. Which of these two snails does our world resemble ?—for there is a great difference between them. I might be well content to live under a dispensation which resembled the first snail, but prefer annihilation to living under one which resembled the second. With the general statement that the world must evolve, and *slowly* evolve, we need not quarrel. But, having granted this, have we

not, in view of the infinite possible degrees of slowness, the right to ask whether this slowly evolving world may not be slower than it ought to be? Think of what we might have to put up with under a system of world-government which claimed not only to be slow, but to be just as slow as it pleased—as slow as the snail which takes a hundred years to crawl across my window pane, or even slower! Or put the same thought otherwise. Suppose that all conceivable worlds improve slowly. What now would be the worst possible world, and what would be the best? The worst would be the slowest, and the best would be the least slow. At all events, you will have a dangerous doctrine on your hands if you put it the other way. For if the best would be the slowest, the virtuous man would be he who did his utmost to retard the rate of progress. Are we not usually bidden so to act as to *hasten* the Kingdom of God?

It is a little strange that Huxley, who was so keen in his indictment of the non-moral character of evolution, and argued so urgently for a mode of conduct opposed to that of nature, should have overlooked this point. It is true that evolution, according to Huxley, does not work for good ends at all, but is rather the source of the difficulties which beset their attainment by man. Perhaps, therefore, it is an advantage to us that nature, in working counter to our moral ideals, takes her time

and dawdles—the one feature of her method which merits our gratitude. One trembles to think what the fate of man would be if the evolution of a non-moral universe were suddenly to acquire a high rate of speed. At all events, Huxley might have said, the slowness of nature, considered as the enemy of the moral ideal, gives us a chance. Let us beat her not only by setting up an aim contrary to hers, but by the superior promptitude and alacrity with which we pursue it! Let us be on our guard against any tendency to adopt her dawdling methods, and instead of taking “slow and gradual” for our motto, let us be quick and sudden in every move! Let us imitate the wisdom of the serpent in the lightning promptitude of our attack! But Huxley says nothing of all this. For anything he says to the contrary, we are entitled, in our warfare with nature, to be as slow and gradual as she is. That, surely, would be to miss a golden chance of stealing a march on the foe.

It is still more surprising that Spencer overlooks the same point. Spencer, unlike Huxley, believes that evolution is slowly and gradually working to a moral end—the reconciliation of “egoism and altruism.” Spencer’s pleading is the opposite of Huxley’s; it is that we should regard evolution as our best friend and fall in with her method—which is that of a slow and gradual movement from confused “homogeneity” to organised “heterogeneity.”



He advises us to take over the method of evolution and make it our own. But here he is not quite consistent with himself. There would be no point in our taking over the method of evolution unless something were to be gained by so doing. What is to be gained? Evidently it is an *acceleration* of the result. The movement to organised heterogeneity will mend its paces if we join in. This means that Spencer, though satisfied with the moral *direction* taken by the evolutionary process, is not altogether satisfied with the *pace*. He wants it *quickened* by our co-operation. It is as though Spencer said to us, "Take nature as your model. Adopt her methods. Make her movement to organised heterogeneity your own. But there is one exception; there is one point at which you can introduce an improvement. Left to herself, nature is *too* slow, *too* gradual. Strike in, therefore, and make the process a little less slow, and a little less gradual, than it naturally tends to be." After all, therefore, evolution is not an unimpeachable model, and Spencer is inconsistent whenever he argues, and he often does so, as though it were.

Let us illustrate all this by reference to a concrete example. We will imagine ourselves assured, by evolution or any other doctrine, that a process is at work by which degrading poverty is being slowly and gradually eliminated from the social conditions of

life. Whether this doctrine is inspiring or otherwise obviously depends on *how* slow and *how* gradual the process is. The end in view might take a thousand years or a million, or anything between, and in either event the process might be correctly described as slow and gradual. But surely a doctrine which leaves these enormous differences an open question cannot yet claim to be consoling or encouraging. I doubt if it can even claim to have any moral significance whatsoever. In the one event, thirty generations of mankind will have to endure the evils of degrading poverty before these evils come to an end. In the other event, thirty thousand generations will have to endure them. Assuming we are content with the first alternative and encouraged by the prospect it holds before us, does it follow that we must be equally content and equally encouraged by the second? Should we judge the man unreasonable or immoral whose response to this doctrine were somewhat as follows:—  
“Well, thirty generations means a long time to wait for results: but if you can assure me that the time is no longer, I am willing to join in and do my bit for the abolition of degrading poverty. But if the period of ~~waiting~~ waiting and suffering is to be prolonged for thirty thousand generations, then, frankly, the game is not worth the candle, and it has no interest whatever for me, except as a thing

to be deplored. Do not put me off with the assurance that progress is necessarily slow and gradual. I grant it; but I am far from granting that it need be as slow and gradual as this. What you have to prove before I can be satisfied is not that progress is necessarily slow, but that it is necessarily so slow that thirty thousand generations, rather than thirty, may have to live with degrading poverty in their midst before redemption can arrive. The only slowness that is divine is that which is no slower than it ought to be. The world is not good merely because it is moving to a good end. This it might do; but if the devil had a charter to make the rate of movement as slow as he pleased, he would be master of the situation. For he would have control of the intervals before arrival, and by making these sufficiently long his power of inflicting evil on the world would be unlimited. Thus the doctrine that the world is moving in the right *direction* does not console me. I want to be assured that the *rate* of the movement is also right. And this latter assurance, I repeat, is not given by the doctrine that progress is necessarily slow."

When philosophers describe evolution as slow, I, for one, find it hard to understand what they mean. Slow is a relative term ~~and~~ implies reference to a standard rate of movement. What is the standard rate of movement to which the progress of an evolving

world can be referred? Slow in relation to what?

However, it is a patent fact that philosophers do call it slow, but seem insensible to the infinite differences of which slowness is susceptible. They never inquire *how* slow the world is, nor seem aware that a world which gains its good character by moving in the right direction might lose it by moving at the wrong rate; divine as to the end in view, but infernal by reason of intolerable slowness in the method of approach. Why so much effort to define the direction and so little to define the rate? Is any ship good enough that will carry me to Boston, even though it takes months in getting there? Of two planets, both moving to the social millennium, should I not be wise to choose my dwelling in the one that will get there first?

From the controversial point of view the doctrine of "slow and gradual," thus expounded, has the merit, if it be a merit, of providing apologists with a secure retreat. So long as progress is merely defined as slow, and the question how slow left unanswered, we can explain all failures and all non-arrivals on the ground that the movement is slower than we thought it was. Not knowing how slow it ought to be or is, there is nothing to prevent the apologist making use of this argument whenever a complaint is raised that things are not going as they should. For example,

if anybody says that the present war betokens the failure of Christianity, the apologist can reply that Christianity pushes its conquests very slowly and that sufficient time has not yet been given. And since none of us—not even the apologist—knows *how* slowly Christianity pushes its conquests, it is impossible to prove that he is wrong—though it is equally impossible for him to prove that he is right. The weakness of the argument is, of course, what appears to be its strength—its infinite elasticity. Whatever crimes Christian nations may commit against the principles of their religion, however often they may repeat them, and to whatever length the ages of their recalcitrancy may be prolonged, it will be just as easy as it is to-day to excuse everything on the ground that progress is necessarily slow—and slower than we thought. As no answer to this excuse is possible now, no answer ever will be possible. Which is as much as to say, the argument is worthless—perhaps the cheapest and feeblest method so far devised of justifying the ways of God to man.

No evolutionist, of the modern type, would ever utter a saying like this: “The Son of Man shall be killed and *after three days* shall rise again.” He would say, “The Son of Man shall be killed, and at an uncertain and undated period of the future, to be determined by the laws of a slow and gradual evolution,

he shall rise again." No evolutionist would say, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." He would say, "All these things shall be fulfilled. Rest content with that, and don't bother about the number of generations that must pass away in the meantime. Jump the intervals."

We still believe in "divine events"; but we not only place them far off—we avoid discussion of how far off they are. "It is not a philosophical question," we say. Our millennium is undated; indeed, its claim to be the millennium is made to rest, largely, on the very fact that it has no date, or, which is saying the same thing, that its date is indefinitely movable.

This, when one reflects upon it, is a very strange and perplexing notion. An event with no date is an event whose nature cannot be defined and consequently cannot be valued. It cannot be defined. According as it occurs at one time or another it will be a different event in every case, for it will occur to a different set of people, in different circumstances, with a different history behind it, and so forth. It cannot be valued. How can I tell whether it is worth my while to work for the millennium if I know nothing of the non-millennial interval which must elapse before its arrival? How can I become an intelligent partner in a scheme whose nature necessarily varies according to the time, absolutely un-

known, at which it is to be carried out? Try the experiment of making yourself a party to some engagement from which all time-data are rigidly excluded. You will find yourself embarked on a purely nonsensical undertaking. Would it have been possible, think you, for the Germans to prepare themselves so efficiently for the Great War if none of them had known *when* it was to come off? It would have been utterly impossible, and the Germans were not so foolish as to make the attempt on those terms. The date, fixed long in advance for the summer of 1914, was the pivot of their preparations. Why, on the other hand, were we but half prepared? Because, though not utterly ignorant that Germany meant war, very few—perhaps none—of us had the faintest notion *when* she meant to begin.

An undated millennium, in like manner, is one whose coming cannot be promoted. Were it not that the human mind has a habit of secretly inserting the date, its belief in some far-off divine event would have evaporated long ago.

We need to remind ourselves that no event is divine merely because it is far-off. No event is divine that is further-off than it ought to be. Many far-off events are not divine. Many events that are divine are not far-off at all, but surprisingly near-to.

Above all we must avoid, what is very common, the employment of this belief in

*far-off* divine events as an excuse for dawdling. Since the ways of God are slow and gradual, is it not a virtue in man to be as slow and gradual as he can? No, it is not!

Many philosophers have taught that Time is unreal. But the dramatist—that is, the enlightened historian,—looking at all things from the human end, can never admit this doctrine. To him Time is more real, because more potent, than anything else. He sees Time for ever eating into and disintegrating the problems of men, laying them into the dust and raising others, unexpectedly, to take their place. He sees the man lingering over his problem, and when at last the solution is ready and the man announces that he is going to begin, lo! the problem itself has vanished, and another, for which he has no solution ready, has risen in its stead. It is a familiar story. While we are deliberating how we will act, the conditions which our action has to meet are being transformed, or rearranged, or carried away altogether by the everlasting flux.

This truth is the fruitful mother of tragedy—and of comedy too. . . . “Slowly and gradually” I discover my error, acknowledge my fault, and resolve after much deliberation to lay the offering of my penitence at the feet of him whom I have wronged. But when I arrive—great God! the blinds are drawn and the mourners are in the house. Too late, too



late! . . . Shall I give a loaf to yon starving man? I will take time to consider, as a philosopher should. To-morrow my mind is made up, and I carry my loaf to the starving man. He is in the mortuary. . . . How shall we reform the drunkards; how shall we educate the children? A generation passes, and still we are deliberating. Another generation, and still we are deliberating. Meanwhile two generations of drunkards have gone to their doom and two generations of children have grown into men. Too late, too late—*for them!* . . . The cult of the slow and gradual! There is no cult in the world on whose altars so many victims have been slain. Are these the ways of God? Not always. “As the lightning which lighteneth from the one part of heaven even unto the other, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man.”

## VI

### THE BRAIN OF FOOLS

THE one article of faith which all men accept without qualification is belief in the supreme value of intelligence. No sane mind does or can entertain any doubt about the matter. One may *profess* a doubt, of course, as one may about anything, if so disposed; but the doubt professed reposes on intelligence, appeals to intelligence, and requires intelligence for its expression. The alternative would be that the doubt was meaningless, and therefore of no relevance to the argument.

A man may say that he attaches a higher value to faith, love, intuition, will, instinct, blind impulse, or what you please. In so saying, either he makes an intelligent statement or he doesn't. If he doesn't, the statement may be dismissed. If he does, the statement reposes on intelligence. Without intelligence, how could we know that what we had got, and what was at work within us, was really love or faith and not some spurious substitute masquerading under that name?

Without intelligence, how could we know what was intuition or instinct, and what was not? Without intelligence, how could we know that the blind impulse we rate so highly was really *blind*, or that it was an impulse at all? Without intelligence, how could we pick out any of these principles of action and recognise them for what they are and make sure we were not mixing them up with one another or with their opposites?

Only a highly intelligent man could live by faith—or by any of the others. A stupid man would think he was living by faith, when, as a matter of fact, he was living by prejudice, or something worse; he would mistake bad reasoning for intuition and constantly mix up the two, as many persons do; he would declare that he was living by instinct, and the next moment his actions would plainly show that he had not the ghost of a notion what an instinct is; he would think he was gratifying the will-to-power, when he was really the victim of an intellectual disease. In short, there are so many things that may be easily mistaken for faith, intuition, instinct, will, and the rest, that only a very intelligent person can avoid the greatest mistakes in picking out the intended principle and guiding his life accordingly. Indeed, I question if any man requires so much intelligence as does the man who turns his back upon intelligence and elects to live by something else. Conscience, for another

example. The statement that conscience is the only guide looks well on paper and may be indisputable. But how would you like to have dealings with a man who "lived by conscience," but had not sufficient intelligence to know what conscience is and what it is not? "Something higher than logic." No doubt. But I observe that several of my friends who believe this are constantly confusing "something *other* than logic" with "something *higher* than logic." One or two of them, thinking to live by what is higher than logic, have most unfortunately got hold of something lower.

It appears, then, that whatever men may say to the contrary, they are really agreed in admitting the supreme value of intelligence. But here again the old question repeats itself, What is intelligence? About this there are great diversities of opinion.

I doubt if we shall ever be able to produce an intelligent definition of intelligence. Our best definitions will turn out to be ingenious attempts to disguise the fact that we are begging the question. We shall have to content ourselves with recognising intelligence by its fruits, and there will always be some difference of opinion as to what are and what are not the fruits in question. All that can be said is that while this way of settling the controversy will never produce perfect agreement, it will produce less disagreement than any other.

Meanwhile we may help ourselves a little by being on our guard against possible pretenders to the throne of "intelligence." One of these has made a doughty appearance in modern times under the name of "brains." In what follows I propose to ask whether "brains" and "intelligence" are really the same thing.

The brain may be described as the steed which the intelligence rides—which is as much as to say that the two are not identical. According to the mettle of the steed is the horsemanship required of the man in the saddle. Fine qualities in the one are by no means a guarantee of fine qualities in the other. When the rider is worthy of his steed you will have a wonderful display. When he is unworthy you will also have a wonderful display, but it will be of a different kind. There will be somersaults in the air and broken necks.

There can be no question that a man may possess a large and highly developed brain and yet be a very great fool. The right notion of a great fool is precisely the notion of a man who possesses but mismanages a large and highly developed brain. The possession of brains is one thing, their management is another. Nor do I know of any form of brain development which carries a guarantee for the right management of the brain.

Suppose now that you were entrusted with the task of creating two men who should be

respectively the wisest and the most foolish of mankind. How would you proceed? I can answer only for myself.

Up to a point my procedure would be the same for both men. I should end by endowing each of them with a large and highly developed brain. But having reached that point I should suddenly find myself at the end of my tether. To my first man, X, I should now say, I have given what he most requires for playing the wisest conceivable part in the world. To my second man, Y, I have also given what he most requires for making the greatest conceivable fool of himself. But to ensure that each will play the part assigned him, something more is required, and that something more I know not how to compass or procure. In the case of the wisest man it is what Dante calls "*the good* of the understanding," and I have never yet encountered a brain so great or highly developed as to ensure its presence. All I can claim is that I have now equipped each of my men with the instrument he needs for entering those high and difficult regions where the brightest wisdom and the darkest folly are equally possible. But how to ensure that wisdom will be displayed by the one and folly by the other, I know not. What is certain is this: without the large and highly developed brain I have given to both, neither of them could have entered the region where the most beneficent truths and the most

malignant errors, the most splendid victories of the mind and its most ridiculous defeats, alike have their origin. If X happens to be wise, his wisdom will be on the grandest scale ; if Y happens to be foolish, his folly will be equally portentous.

The conclusion indicated is that of all the implements committed to the use of man the brain is the most difficult to manage aright. The range of its possible mismanagement is widest, and the penalties for its mismanagement are the most severe.

But some will object to this on the ground that the brain is a self-managing apparatus, and therefore requires no outside management at all. The notion of intelligence as something other than the brain, which must be called in, so to speak, to prevent mistakes, is absurd. The brain automatically supplies whatever intelligence may be needed in the conduct of its own business. The most highly developed brain is, *ipso facto*, the best managed.

This is a popular view and distinctly modern. But it has some difficulties which may be worth pointing out.

If every brain is a self-managing apparatus, what right has any one brain to interfere with any other in the management of its own business? Now the aforesaid objectors do, plainly, interfere. They seek to interfere with me in the views expressed in this essay—that

is what objecting means. They say to me in effect, "Your mistaken views on this subject indicate a mismanagement of your brain. Your brain has gone wrong at this point. Let it abandon its present proceedings and adopt the proceedings of our brains instead - and then it will go right." But on their theory, which is that the brain automatically supplies the intelligence needed for its own management, what right have they to say to me anything of the kind? By their own showing my opinion is as good as theirs. In other words, assuming that intelligence is simply what brain produces, I see no earthly reason why the product of one man's brain should be one whit better than the product of another's. The big brain would produce more of it, and the little brain less of it; but what if the product were bad in both cases? The advantage would then be with the lesser brain.

"No," answers the objector; "you forget that our brain is larger and more highly developed than yours." Well, what if it is? Till you have proved the contrary, I hold myself free to suspect that your large and highly developed brain is the organ of a large and highly developed mistake—like the German policy in the present war. Assuming that you are wrong, a big brain would be precisely what you need to carry off the enormity of your error by the invention of ingenious self-deceptions. Consider the Germans once more



—a race noted the world over for the size of its brain.

Because the factory in the next town is larger and more highly developed than the cobbler's shop over the way, does it follow that the factory turns out the better boots? I tell you it does not. One pair of the cobbler's boots will outlast three of the machine-made article.

Make sure, before you go further, that the same difference does not exist between the product of your great and highly developed brain-factory and the work of us poor cobblers in our little shops. In point of quality we may have something to say for ourselves. Meanwhile we refuse to be bullied by your big brains. The Lord hath no more delight in the size of a man's brain than he has in the length of his legs.

I conclude, then, that high foreheads and massive craniums, however numerous they may have become, do not announce that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. They are equally compatible with the contrary announcement. This nobody has ever doubted. It has always been plain as daylight that for expert roguery on the largest scale the developed brain is the organ *par excellence*. But our present theme has ventured a more daring flight. We have contended that brains are the fool's organ no less than the rogue's. The folly that is most foolish is not simple folly

(which is often hard to distinguish from the highest wisdom, as St Paul indicates), but ingenious folly, complicated folly, folly that is carefully planned, elaborately prepared for, intensely thought out, and backed up by a multitude of reasons which deceive the fool into thinking himself wise—in a word, German folly; and for that brains are the *sine qua non*.

Believing unreservedly, then, in the value of intelligence, we find it necessary to make extensive reservations before we can state any kind of belief in the value of "brains." Intelligence and "brains" are by no means the same thing. To treat them as if they were has been one of the greatest errors of our time.

There are some who believe that the progress of mankind consists in the development of the human brain. But if that be all, there are grounds for fearing that the end of progress may be the appearance on the planet of a race of ingenious fools. The devil, we may be sure, would be a warm supporter of every scheme for the development of the brain. It is one of several points on which the Worst and the Best are at one.

## VII

### THE PROJECT OF A NEW LABOUR PARTY

BEFORE the world is much older there will come into being a Labour Party whose principle, or motto, will be this:—

*“That every man shall enjoy the day’s work and a good article come out at the end of it.”*

The two halves of this motto are reciprocal. Unless a good article come out at the end of it, the day’s work cannot be enjoyed. Unless the day’s work be enjoyed, a good article is not forthcoming. The principle may therefore be expressed in terms either of enjoyment or of good articles.

Until labour is founded on this principle, under either form of expression, the working man will never be satisfied. On the contrary, he will become more dissatisfied and labour troubles will spread and intensify. However short his hours, the worker will want them shorter; and however large his pay, he will want it larger. Nor is he to be blamed.

The policy of existing Labour Parties aims at improving the condition of the workers ; and this has the sympathy of every right-feeling and right-thinking man. But so long as the *work* deteriorates in quality the condition of the *workers* cannot improve. And it has steadily deteriorated for a long time past, not only in the sense that the production of bad articles has increased, but in the correlative sense that the work which is needed to produce them has become more and more tiresome to the body and less and less interesting to the mind. Hence it is that nearly all our efforts to improve the condition of the workers have a negative character. That is to say, they are attempts to undo with one hand mischiefs which are being done on a far larger scale with the other. Even our system of elementary education has the character of a palliative, and is better compared with a bottle of medicine in the hands of a doctor than with the health-bringing breezes of heaven. It hardly affects the sources of the disease, though it sharpens our consciousness that disease exists. And so in general we work hard to stem the fringes of the inundation, but make no efforts to turn off the tap.

The rise of the new Labour Party will be coincident with the disappearance of many schemes of social reform—schemes which, under existing conditions, are admirable. They will disappear because they will no

longer be wanted. When human life is on a wrong basis the most that legislation can effect is a more equitable distribution of the resulting evils. If the source of these evils could be reached and stopped, the question of their equitable distribution would of course disappear. Much that we try to arrange would spontaneously arrange itself.

And may it not be laid down as a rule of universal application that the only satisfactory arrangements in human affairs are those which have a spontaneous origin in the nature of man as a rational being? Now, so long as men, or the majority of them, are engaged upon work which cannot be enjoyed, and by which good articles are not produced, their nature as rational beings is balked of its development and cannot assert itself. Spontaneous order there is little or none. Men cease to believe even in its possibility. In place of it there arises the artificial order which is called Government. And to this we pin our faith until in course of time we become blind to the plainest of truths, which is this: that whereas there is no such thing as governing *men*, there is such a thing as preventing them from governing themselves. When the new Labour Party gets to work, "the problem of labour" will be solved with the minimum of legislation.

There is only one ground on which employers and employed can ever unite—the production of the best possible article, which,

as we have seen, is another name for the enjoyment of work. A good article differs from a bad chiefly in this, that whereas the bad has a market value, only the good has a human value as well. It stands for a common pride and for the friendliest relations among all concerned in its production. The men who produce it do not merely co-operate, which of itself is of small human significance; they co-operate on the highest ground; they do their best *together*. It is not enough to say that good work maintains the self-respect of the worker. It certainly does so; but in addition it maintains his respect for everyone else who has a share with him in the process of production. Producers of good articles respect one another: producers of bad articles despise one another—and will any wages you can pay them make up for that? Observe a group of workmen doing bad work—you can easily find one. Listen to their conversation, to their jokes. How they snarl and curse one another over the details of the work! Then pass into some shop or factory when a bit of really fine work is being turned out; and note the difference in the human atmosphere. Note the relations of employer and employed; note, above all, the relations among the workers themselves. Then think of industrial society as one huge workshop and consider the difference that would be made in the *human* values by the substitution of good work for bad.

This holds equally true whether the employer be the State or a private individual. The only socialism which is worth a moment's consideration is that—if there be any such—which means the substitution of good work for bad, of work which inspires mutual respect for work which inspires mutual contempt, of work which can for work which cannot be enjoyed. A State which confined its functions to the ownership of capital, the organisation of production, and the distribution of the product, but paid no attention to the quality of the work, would stand in exactly the same relation to its members as that in which the private employer now stands—which is on the whole a relation of hostility and suspicion. But if good work were the object, the question of State or private ownership would adjust itself. The enjoyment of the day's work, and the appearance of a good article at the end of it, would justify the system, whatever it was, just as now the tedium of the day's work, and the appearance of a bad article at the end of it, condemn the system, whatever it is. Under the first condition men are necessarily at enmity with one another. Under the second they are friends. What binds men together is the consciousness of being partners in a work which is really worth doing, a consciousness which industrial civilisation has so far signally failed to produce. Till that is recognised and appropriate measures taken, we shall

advance no further. The root of the labour problem is psychological and human—it is not economic at all.

On the basis of good work—and on no other—a well-ordered State would arise of itself. The unworthy would die out automatically, which, in all candour, is the only satisfactory way in which they can be disposed of. Pauperism and crime would disappear—pauperism for the simple reason that bad work is the fountain-head of all impoverishment: crime because its attractiveness, as a substitute for work, would no longer exist. Education, instead of being, as now, a thing superimposed from without, mostly out of relation to actual needs, would become part and parcel of the normal business of life: the distinction between the school and the workshop would disappear. Even the nations, in their corporate characters, would begin to acquire some of the characteristics of rational beings. Their predatory designs on each other's wealth, which are the root of war, would give way to a noble emulation.

As with the workers of each nation, so with the workers of all nations: the only ground on which they can ever unite is that of a common determination to produce the best possible work. It has been said that there would be no more wars if international politics were in the hands of working men, because in every land the working classes have a common aim. But this, surely, is shallow reasoning. A



common aim has no unifying efficacy unless it be an aim of the right sort. Otherwise the common aim may have an effect the precise opposite of that which is desired, as would happen, for example, if you threw a handful of pennies to a crowd of boys, when the common aim of the boys, which is the capture of the pennies, would merely lead to a general scrimmage. Exactly the same thing would happen in a group of nations ruled by Labour Parties, so long as the common ideal of these parties were expressed in the formula—"the minimum amount of work and the maximum amount of pay." Under these conditions the interests of peace would be no safer in the hands of working men than in those of any other class. Work being the evil most dreaded, and freedom from its burden the good most coveted, these labour-governed nations would continue to fight one another for means of escape from the burden, if for no other reason. There would be a continual effort on the part of the strong to thrust the dirty work of civilisation upon the shoulders of the weak, and the weak would arm themselves to resist. "Minimum work and maximum pay" is only another name for the determination that the burden of life shall be borne by somebody else. It would leave the international situation almost exactly what it is. The only difference would be that the cause of quarrel would be shifted as to its seat, but not changed as to its nature. We

should merely repeat on the international scale what has happened up to date in all attempts to solve the labour problem by legislation.

But if the other ideal were resolutely adopted—and why should it not be?—a different order of effects would disclose itself. It is in the effort to produce the best work, and in nothing else, that men become effectively conscious of their need of one another. It is a fatal but common mistake to suppose that men tend naturally to love one another *merely, as men*—that, so to speak, you have only to bring a multitude of human beings face to face and brotherhood will immediately start into being. Brotherhood begins to be only at the moment when men recognise one another as partners *in a noble aim*. I say a noble aim, not a common aim. They do not love one another, just because they are all out together for minimum work and maximum pay. On that basis they suspect one another, and thrust one another aside. But when the aim is to do the best work, or to produce the best article, the discovery is immediately made that the thing simply cannot be done without mutual respect and mutual love, and that enmity, hatred, and disorder are fatal to the end in view. On no other terms is it humanly possible for men to enjoy the common task; and unless the task be enjoyed. I repeat, a good article cannot come out at the end of it.

No great society has ever yet adopted good

equally independent neighbours. Moreover, if each of the six were intent on cultivating his garden in the best possible way, this pursuit of the best, even though it were a different kind of best in every case, would be a further ground of brotherly relations. Emulation, when it takes the form of competing to produce the *best*, as distinct from the *biggest*, is one of the main roots of human love. Thus the six men, each working on his own and for his own, might constitute a true spiritual community, and that without any kind of formal compact among themselves. Meanwhile each would learn much from his neighbours, by the simple process of looking over the fence.

But this state of things, though highly favourable to the brotherly relations of the six gardeners, would hardly appear the best for the gardens. What the gardens require is co-operation and a common system. Enter then the social reformer, presumably one of the six, who is an expert in gardening and a political economist.

Yielding to the arguments of this man, our six gardeners now organise themselves. There is a common market, a common horse and cart, a common seed supply, and one lawnmower instead of six, and, above all, there is expert advice and unitary control. The profitableness of the garden goes up by leaps and bounds.

Meanwhile the human relations of the

gardeners, in spite of their organisation, are not quite as good as they were. The expert leader becomes ambitious, and his efforts to impose his *Kultur* on the rest are resented. Parties are formed, and a good deal of energy and intelligence which used to be spent in gardening is now spent on the discussion of rival policies. The new system, though better for the economic working of the gardens, may be worse for the gardeners.

But worse things may happen. The economic arrangement, admirable for its own purpose, may serve another purpose which nobody foresaw. It may become an instrument for private gain in the hands of any one of the six who is astute enough to see his chance and unscrupulous enough to make use of it. The expert, for example, may show his superior intelligence not only in the management of gardens but in the management of gardeners. To such a man the efficiency of the economic machine will become a temptation. He will know how to make himself indispensable to its working, just as Napoleon made himself indispensable to the First Republic, just as the German militarists made themselves indispensable to Germany; and one day the little community will wake up to find itself in that man's power. Then there will be a revolution, in the course of which the fences will be broken down, the growing crops trampled underfoot, the

gardens destroyed, and some of the gardeners wounded or slain.

In this case we should have to say that the new economic system has defeated its own object. As a purely business enterprise it has turned out less profitable in the long run than the old arrangement, under which each man worked independently and left his neighbours to do the same. Externally systematic and orderly, the new has nevertheless provoked psychological reactions which have destroyed the value of these advantages, whereas the old, though outwardly anarchic, was inwardly well balanced and orderly in its human relations. Wasteful as the old condition was in the details of its working, it avoided the more serious wastage caused by volcanic explosions from within; and though the old system would be hopelessly beaten by the new on the returns of a single year, the returns of five centuries might very well show a large balance in its failure. Thus from the economic as well as from the human point of view conditions are easily conceivable under which the old arrangement would be preferable.

Artistic considerations would reinforce the preference. The six back gardens worked in the manner first described would be adorned with roses and other useless flowers, while the second class would have none of these things, or very few. It is the tendency of economic co-operation to eliminate what is useless, which

is a good thing, but unfortunately, as we all know, it tends to eliminate what is beautiful at the same time. The explanation of which is simple. When the question is of retaining something useful, you can always give reasons which all the co-operators will accept; but when the question is of retaining something beautiful, its value can never be demonstrated by argument, and the consequence is that only some of the co-operators will listen to what you have to say. Economic co-operation runs to quantity, because quantity is something that can be proved to everybody's satisfaction; meanwhile, quality, which is incapable of proof, is apt to suffer. Thus we shall find that the new system produces fruits and vegetables much bigger than the old: on the other hand, those of the old were much sweeter to the palate. The old gardeners *tasted* one another's produce: the new gardeners put a price on it.

This, I venture to submit, is characteristic of the whole form of civilisation at the present day. The price to be put upon its works baffles the imagination: it has run out into quantities which are as unrealisable by us as are the sidereal magnitudes; at the same time, it is gravely doubtful whether this vast increase of bulk has not been accompanied by deterioration in quality; whether these mighty fruits are as satisfying to the human palate as those were which came to the table in a simpler age.

The world has developed its economy more in the interests of the gardens which man has to cultivate on this planet and less in the interests of the man who has to cultivate them. We live under a form of civilisation which began its work from the economic end instead of from the human end, and which has preserved that order of working, the inversion of the true order, down to the last of its achievements—the present war. The groundwork of its polity is to be sought in things rather than men; in quantities rather than in qualities. Hence it is that the laws which rule our history, and the forces which determine its issues, spring rather from the wealth which nations make than from the nations who make the wealth. We call it industrial civilisation; though it may well be doubted whether a civilisation which is dominated by industry, in the sense that all human interests must yield to the necessity of conducting industry on the largest possible scale, can properly be called civilisation at all. Be that as it may, we can hardly escape this conclusion:—That for some generations past the industrial enterprise, measured always in terms of quantity, has been placed in the forefront of human endeavour, and that all the movements of our social history have been guided by its quantitative ideals; while man, in his hundreds of millions, and with a complex nature by no means adapted to run in this kind of harness,

has been left to adjust his life to these conditions as best he could. Humanity has been summoned to dance attendance on economy—an impossible requirement except within the narrowest limits. That humanity has to some extent succeeded in performing this adjustment is, of course, apparent; but the cases where adjustment has failed are a thousand times more striking than those in which it has succeeded.

Our social legislation bears witness to the failures rather than to the successes. It represents an attempt—an heroic attempt—to undo the mischief and to straighten out the intolerable confusion which arise when millions of men, whose nature demands another kind of satisfaction, are compelled to spend their lives in serving a system of which the basis is not human, but economic. As one instance among thousands, I will mention the Insurance Act—a measure, in my opinion, urgently needed by existing conditions. But is it not significant that existing conditions should need such a measure? Must we not suspect that something is radically wrong with a system whose urgent requirement is that we should insure ourselves against its effects? Does not the success of the measure, however great, repose upon an antecedent confession of failure? The same holds good of most of the social legislation with which we have been familiar in recent times. It is, I repeat, an heroic attempt to



adjust the human conditions to a form of civilisation which in its essential outlines is not human at all—but mechanical, industrial, quantitative, and economic.<sup>1</sup>

I doubt, moreover, whether the economic enterprise can be judged a success even from its own point of view. The parable at the beginning was intended to suggest that, among other things. The triumphs attending the march of quantitative civilisation seem to have a brief career, being often undone and destroyed by explosions among the human elements which they have overridden. There is an old proverb, "Count no man happy till you see the end of him." In like manner it may be truly said, "Count nothing wealth till you see the end of it." Before concluding that industrial nations are really enriched by their material possessions, wait and see how they spend them. In one of the Hebrew Psalms there is a wise remark about the man who "heapeth up riches and knoweth not who will gather them." That man, says the Psalmist, walketh in a vain show. May not that saying be very truly applied to the industrial civilisation of the last fifty or the last hundred years? During that time the industrial nations have been heaping up riches on a scale which baffles the imagination—a scale of which the earlier economists had no

<sup>1</sup> See an excellent article on this subject by Mr C. E. Ashbee in the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1916.

conception, and which, had it been revealed to them, they would have found staggering and incredible. Little heed was paid to the question, who would gather these vast accumulations of wealth, or for what they would be gathered. It was vaguely hoped that in some way, not clearly defined, they would contribute to the happiness of millions of men. There were occasional dreamers who looked forward to the time when the whole human race, having built up a colossal fortune, would, so to speak, retire from business, and enjoy a well-earned leisure for the rest of the ages, living on the fruits of its former exertions. These hopes and dreams have received a cruel disappointment. There is now no prospect of the human race being able to retire from business. The day of slippered ease and universal picnic is indefinitely postponed. The fruits accumulated by generations of toil, which were to make these things possible, are at this moment being poured down into a bottomless gulf at the rate of six thousand millions a year. They were heaped up in the belief that they would contribute to human happiness—they are being gathered for the war. While industrialism at the one end has been organising and legislating and building up and spreading the net of a mechanical order over the wide world, the human forces at the other end have broken loose, revealing, to everyone who can read the sign, that the

major powers which determine the course of history have been uncontrolled and all adrift. The parable of the six back gardens is being re-enacted on a colossal scale. In the one case, as in the other, the result cannot be claimed as an economic success. The garden, as well as the gardener, has come to grief.

## IX

# THE TYRANNY OF MERE THINGS

“Thou marshall’st me the way that I was going ;  
And such an instrument I was to use.”—*Macbeth*.

WE often learn, when it is too late, that the existence of an instrument for performing an action is the cause of that action being performed. If there are daggers, the likelihood is that sooner or later there will be stabbing ; if armaments, wars ; if tools, trade ; if rhetoric, argument. Many a murderer would have remained innocent had he not possessed a knife or a gun ; many a man would have written sonnets or painted pictures had his father not been the owner of a mill ; many an unprofitable controversy would have been avoided had not a weapon been provided by a tempting phrase, or well-turned period, suddenly occurring to one or other of the disputants.

These statements when applied to the actions of individuals are commonplace to

the point of truism. But they acquire a new interest when applied on the large scale to the lives of nations and to the great movements of history.

This extension of scope is what I propose in the present essay. I shall endeavour to draw attention to the enormous influence exercised over the form and direction of modern civilisation by the power which resides in machinery of all kinds. I shall suggest that this power, intended originally for the service of man, has become in several respects his master. The theme, of course, is not new. But it seems to me that current events give it a new importance and a commanding interest.

In their origin tools and machines represent the effort of man to facilitate the satisfaction of his natural wants. These natural wants are the necessity which is mother to invention.

But every such tool or machine, when invented, gives rise to a further necessity, economic in nature, which the inventor perhaps did not foresee, and which in course of time tends to overshadow and obscure the original wants served by the contrivance. This is the necessity of keeping the machine in continuous working. Once constructed it must be "kept going"; otherwise the owner of it will suffer loss. Thus we could hardly contend that the conscious motive of the

Lancashire cotton trade, or of the Yorkshire wool trade, is the desire to clothe the naked. No doubt the naked are clothed by these industries; but the "spring of action" is primarily economic. It lies in the necessity of carrying on the business, keeping the vast machinery in commission, and the multitudes of employ  s in work. The manufacturer or the workman may gladly assent, when reminded, that his labour meets the primary want of man for clothes or food, and he may receive a moral stimulus or consolation from the reminder. But this thought is not in the forefront of his mind as he sits in his office or stands at his loom. His motive is "business." He is there to make profits or to earn his living, which he can only do by using the machinery to the uttermost. If this is allowed to fall idle he will become bankrupt or starve.

The more complex and costly the machinery becomes, the more will this secondary motive tend to push the primary into the background, until at last the original purpose passes out of immediate consciousness. The time comes when thousands of millions of capital are invested in "plant," and nations are employed in the task of keeping it in commission. At all costs it must be kept going or the nation will perish economically. Thus if decay threatens an industry, like the making of cloth, the question before our legislators and

the public is not primarily as to the effect on the nakedness of mankind, but as to the effect on the manufacturers and workmen employed in the industry, and through them on the industrial organisation at large. In this way industrial civilisation comes at last to mean that the need of using the machinery which man has created takes the first place in thought: while the needs the machinery was originally created to serve take the second. The means become the end.

Our attention is constantly being called by social reformers to certain tyrannies, and vested interests of an obnoxious kind, in our present system of industry. I do not here deny that these things exist and call for remedy. But I suggest that behind the tyrannies indicated there stands a major tyranny of which *all* parties to the system are the victims in differing degrees. This is the tyranny of the enormous accumulations of complicated mechanical contrivances which, in their organised totality, compel the human race to keep them going or run the risk of perishing. Man by "his wisdom and his brightness" has created this monster, and the monster has rewarded his creator by laying down the terms on which he is to live. He may continue to live only so long as he feeds the fires he has lit and turns the wheels he has invented. To this he must devote the major part of his energies, his intelligence

and his soul—or perish. The relation of his vital to his economic interests has thus been reversed. Whereas at the first the economic served the vital, it is now the vital that serves the economic. The machine—meaning by this the whole mechanical complex of civilisation—rules the man.

To be sure, the machine rewards its servants; but it rewards them on its own terms. It confers prosperity on communities which serve it diligently; but has not our very notion of what prosperity is been imposed upon us by the necessity of satisfying the economic rather than the human conditions of our life? Here we have, I venture to think, the deeper explanation of the “social unrest” of which we have heard so much. Fundamentally, it is not a rebellion of class against class, but of the human soul in all classes against the limitations set to its life by economic mechanism. Never will man feel himself really prosperous so long as his well-being is defined by these limits. Never will he be satisfied by a reward which is measured in purely economic terms, no matter what the amount nor how distributed. This was the burden of Ruskin, and for sixty years the course of social history has been confirming it in every particular.

And yet it does not appear to have been sufficiently weighed by social reformers. With them the question is—Who shall possess the



machine, the State or the individual? But a closer scrutiny of social conditions suggests that this question might with advantage be reversed. Whichever of the two—State or individual—wins the coveted position, that position, unless accompanied by far more radical changes, would not be one of mastery but one of servitude. What is called State-ownership of machinery is really machinery-ownership of the State. It would not free man from economic servitude, but merely readjust its terms, making no great difference to the fundamental conditions under which human life is being lived. Those conditions would still be, as now, that man, in his societies, must accommodate his vital interests to the supreme necessity of keeping the machine in commission, and must seek no “ends” which are incompatible with this. Such an outcome is not the “freedom” which our dreams demand for the soul.

To understand these conditions in the sphere of our industrial life requires an effort of the imagination greater, perhaps, than some of us are willing to put forth, and greater than many would deem permissible. When, however, we turn from industrial to military organisation, the tyranny of the machine is set forth in characters which admit of no mistake.

A glance at the present state of Europe reveals the extraordinary spectacle of great

and intelligent nations whose warlike policies are largely dictated by their armaments. For there is no more certain truth than this: that if you create a vast fighting machine it will sooner or later compel you to fight, whether you want to fight or no. That peace can be maintained indefinitely while millions of men are training themselves for war, and arming themselves for war with every conceivable kind of mechanical device, is one of those childish suppositions which only infatuated minds could entertain. These vast machines, whether armies or engines of war, are *made to be used*; and though the day when they will be used may be long deferred by a process of spectacular playing at war, the impulse to use them for their intended purpose will ultimately brush this aside as insufficient, and will prevail against every consideration of reason, humanity, and common sense. The military machine will overpower the minds which have called it into being. It may not allow them even to choose the *time* when war is to begin. The time comes inevitably when the mechanism has reached a certain degree of perfection. This creates its own occasion by the fact that the power is now at the maximum, the ammunition at hand, the bearings oiled, the guns loaded and the matches lit. Nations make war when armies are *ready to begin*.

Armaments possess what I have no hesitation in calling a will of their own—a will to

be used as armaments. Make them big enough and costly enough, and they will assuredly get out of hand and control the governments by which they are nominally controlled. Some of them, perhaps, were created originally for the purpose of keeping the peace, under the leading of that most fallacious of maxims—*si vis pacem para bellum*. But “bellum” is what the armament is fitted for making; and “bellum” is what the armament will one day make. Europe, confronted with a vision of its embattled armies and fleets, might well say to the vast assemblage, as Macbeth said to the air-drawn dagger:

“Thou marshall’st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument *I was to use.*”

Such, then, are two striking forms in which the tyranny of the machine makes itself felt in modern life. I have now to suggest that they are symptoms of a deeper tyranny whose seat is in the ideal world. The conditions we have noted are like an immense mirror which reveals to the modern man the workings of his own mind and shows him what spirit he is of.

Throughout the whole of its history the human mind has been engaged in fabricating conceptions, or, as some prefer to say, in giving birth to ideas. “Force,” “matter,” “law,” “knowledge,” “happiness,” “virtue,” “society,” “government,” “popular rights,”

“order,” “progress,” “evolution,” are examples of these ideas. In their simpler form they are the “tools” of thought; in the more complicated they may be compared to “machines”; in the most complicated—that is, when combined into systems of science—they resemble the economic mechanism of an industrial society, or even a great military organisation.

The origin of these spiritual tools is of like nature with the origin of spades, steel saws, spinning-jennies, aeroplanes, and Krupp guns. Necessity is the mother of their invention. They are means to the satisfaction of some want, need, or desire. “Conceptions” are not copies or photographic reproductions of anything external to themselves. Their nature is explained by their function, which is to economise, facilitate, extend, and expedite the work of the spirit, thereby attaining a larger, richer, speedier satisfaction of the wants they are intended to serve. Ideas and systems of thought are, strictly speaking, “inventions.” Man wants to fly, and contrives an aeroplane. He wants to explain the universe, and constructs a metaphysical system. The metaphysic no less than the aeroplane has a purpose in view and is to be understood accordingly. Both things bespeak the nature of man as a tool-making animal. Of the ideal tools so invented some have, as it were, a stationary use; for example, the geometrical ideas, which are

like optical instruments, enabling us to penetrate the secrets of space. Others suggest locomotion, like the idea of evolution, which seems to carry the mind at enormous speed over vast ranges of time.

The ideal tools are interdependent in their working. Like the mechanical industries of a nation, they are associated into groups; and they grow more numerous and more complex as the needs of the mind increase. The sciences are intellectual "industries"; they satisfy wants which multiply like the population of the earth. To meet the growing demand these wants create there must be closer organisation of the working parts of mental industry—knowledge must become more systematic. Moreover, since many of the ideas are not complete in themselves, but only "components" of much larger conceptual systems, a special science, which is itself another system of conceptions, must come into being, to adapt the parts to one another and define the formulæ which are to regulate their common action. This science is logic. Thus the work of ideal invention grows by what it feeds on: one notion calls for another; each depends more intimately on the rest; until at the end of long ages the world of knowledge becomes like the Black Country in a time of roaring trade—the smoke belching from the chimneys, the furnaces in full blast, the air quivering to the grind and rattle of engines, while millions

of men and women hurry hither and thither or stand at their posts, stoking, hammering, filing, oiling, receiving their wages and computing their gains.

But the parallel does not end at this point.

As the power and complexity of the intellectual machine develop, it tends to absorb more and more of the attention and energies of thought. The process is here repeated which we have already noted in the economic sphere. Over against the vital necessities which the work of thought has, in the first place, to satisfy, there grow up necessities of a second order, which in course of time usurp the place of their primaries. Little by little the essential needs of man as a living soul become obscured by the overwhelming presence of the logical apparatus originally created to satisfy those needs. An enormous vested interest grows up round the mere mechanism of thought. At all costs the furnaces must be kept in blast; at all costs the machinery must continue to work; at all costs the logical armament—I use the term advisedly—must not be balked of its office. Hence, in close analogy to economic civilisation, there arises the scientific type of culture, under which the human spirit is still free to live and move, but only within the limits prescribed by the paramount need of giving employment to the mechanism of thought. This becomes at

length the supreme authority of life and the dictator of philosophy. The cult of mechanism has established itself in the innermost chambers of the spirit.

Deeply characteristic of this cult is the inability of its followers to perceive the limitations it imposes upon them. Our devotion—for we are all devotees—is blind. That our life should be susceptible of any other form or direction save that which the prevalent dictatorship allows seems to us an unthinkable absurdity, and the mere suggestion of such a thing is denounced as the surrender of the reason. It is only at times of shock and upheaval like the present, when the foundations of life are being laid bare, that we are able to discern within ourselves a deeper rationality, whose freedom we have *already* surrendered, against its nature, to an immensely potent but inferior principle.

Thus, in the first place, our very notions of Truth are formed under the necessity of satisfying the requirements of the cult. Truth must be something of which the logical apparatus can make use. Therefore, whatever fits in with the mechanism, whatever enlarges the scope of the working, whatever contributes to the smoothness of the running, whatever augments the final product of argument—is Truth. Whatever fails to fulfil these conditions is Error.

Our notion of the Good is formed in like

manner. The test of the Good is its tendency to give employment to ratiocination. The good of man becomes more and more closely identified with logical success. That man is most virtuous or happy whose life exhibits the character of a logically working "whole." That society is nearest the Kingdom of God in which the relationships of man with man approximate most nearly to the ideal logical structure. Whatever else the Good may be, it must always be that which provides the good man with the opportunity of explaining his goodness. Anything else is unthinkable.

A like conformity to the prevalent cult is to be observed in the realms of Art and Religion. In both these realms "criticism" is the ruling power; "criticism" being only another name for the spirit which has yielded its activities, for the time being, to the demands of the machine. In a critical age we are apt to test the worth of all things, even of Art and Religion, by the quality of the grist which they bring to the argumentative mill: the real interest at stake being not that of Art or Religion but that of criticism itself. In addition to their original function, which is to delight or inspire, Art and Religion have now won a secondary function, which is to provide subjects for discussion, to feed the critical powers. This in itself is no evil; the mischief begins at the next stage. For as criticism increases in range, complexity, and skill,



this secondary function, as before, absorbs to itself the energies intended for the primary. Creativeness wanes, argument waxes: the Poet retires to the shadows, the Professor of Poetry steps into the light; the text is lost in the commentary; prayer sinks to the position of an incident in public worship, the sermon becomes the centre of attraction and the essential thing. Hence the forms of religion most honoured in a critical age are apt to be, not those which touch the human heart most deeply, but those which give argument the widest scope, discussion the most numerous topics, and rhetoric the most tempting themes. We may often watch our minds or the minds of our neighbours picking their way, like wary travellers, among the green pastures where these opportunities abound. Art, also, may be seen at such times to be following a theory. Several recent developments in the arts, such as Impressionism and Futurism, show unmistakable signs of having originated in an argument. Only a soulless dialectic could produce the confusion they exhibit. We may well doubt whether the great artists of earlier ages — Phidias, Tintoretto — knew precisely what they were doing. But our Impressionists and Futurists know—though perhaps we who watch them do not. Like the Germans in their quest for world-dominion, they are under the orders of a theory. First, they give you a lecture on their art; then they show you a

specimen of it. Once more, policy conforms to armaments.

We may say, in general, that every object of thought and every motion of the spirit is transformed by the prevalent cult into a "problem." First the thing must be identified with the problem of the thing; then, and then only, can the iron teeth of ratiocination get to work upon its substance. Thus at the present time we have the problem of Truth, the problem of Good, the problem of Life, the problem of Art, the problem of Religion, the problem of Society, the problem of the Universe--the problem of everything. It is to be observed that though the dominant power has forced all these things to assume the problematic form, it has not, so far, provided satisfactory answers. But if on observing this a thinker should suggest, as some have done, that the answer to the problem of Life, for example, lies in the discovery that Life is something greater than a problem, he will immediately find himself in conflict with the vested interests of mechanical culture, and his reputation, in consequence, will run no inconsiderable risk. Claiming liberty for his thinking, he is treated as the enemy of thought.

These tendencies having acquired a certain strength give rise to a corresponding system of intellectual discipline, which embraces every form of education and has for its object the

cultivation of the tendency into a fixed habit of mind.

Of which system the first thing to be said is that it affords little scope for genuine freedom of thought.

In an age when everybody is supposed to think for himself, this, I am well aware, may seem an absurd statement. And so, indeed, it would be were the presence of freedom to be attested by the *amount* of thinking which is permitted. But the true test lies in the *quality* of our thinking and not in the amount. The whole world may roar with thought, and this may yet remain essentially servile. So long as thought merely copies an existing pattern it is not free, no matter how *much* of it there may be. There is only one sure mark by which the presence of liberty in the life of the spirit may be detected—and that is creation, or, if you will, originality. A very little of this is worth more as a witness to liberty than any assignable amount of standardised thinking.

Freedom of thought implies, among other things, that the teacher—of anything from the “three R’s” to theology—provokes the originality of his pupil, treats the pupil not as a recipient but as a reacting agent, accepts him as the predominant partner in the work of education, and aims at a result which shall contain a large contribution from the free activity of his mind. Under genuine freedom nothing can be further from the aim of the

teacher than to impress upon the minds of others a slavish copy of the doctrine taught, even though this should happen to be the doctrine of freedom itself. On the contrary, he invites reaction to the uttermost, and is not the least cast down if the pupil adds so much of his own to the thought which is being given him that the two together issue in a third thought widely different from that which started the process. If the teacher be a true liberal he will be careful not to make positive instruction (especially moral instruction) so large in amount as to overwhelm, nor so insistent in form as to cramp, the energies of the receiving mind; and will gladly reduce his own share in the joint operation, or soften its emphasis, or even remain altogether silent for long intervals, in order that larger room may be provided for the answering contribution of his partner. "He must increase, but I must decrease," will be his motto.

Freedom of thought, therefore, does not mean merely that every individual is licensed to address his opinions to the world in unlimited monologue. It should rather be compared to a *conversation* between men of good manners, in which the object of each speaker is not to impress his own mind on the rest, but rather to elicit from the joint contributions of the whole company some higher wisdom than he, or any other individual present, can severally claim to possess.

But in a critical age, when the logical apparatus has got the upper hand of the spirit it was intended to serve, freedom of thought takes the more restricted form. Freedom of criticism is indeed permitted; but inasmuch as thought has been standardised in accordance with the requirements of the machine, criticism, though enormous in amount, will tend to be uniformly mechanical in quality. The supreme interests at stake being those of the system of intellectual discipline now in vogue, no reaction will be encouraged, or perhaps allowed, which place these in peril. That is a most serious limitation. It means that you may argue as you will, provided you raise no voice of rebellion against the system which lays down the rule of the argument. Otherwise a "Zabern incident" may result.

Our culture has, on the whole, submitted to these conditions without protest. I do not say that it leaves room for no originality. But most of the originality there is moves within the limits prescribed, and has in consequence a purely argumentative character. The amount of intellectual activity is enormous; but of creativeness, which is the mark of freedom, there is remarkably little.

Of further symptoms, confirmatory of this diagnosis, I will mention only one, and that without elaboration. This is the exaggerated estimate we are in the habit of placing on the value of mere moral exhortation. By far the

greater part of the moral exhortation now being offered so plentifully is, I fear, futile. Either it produces no reaction at all or the reaction it does produce is one of moral indifference, which is worse than none. And this futility, I believe, if traced to its source, would be found to originate in the twofold illusion that morality is a standardised product, and that the soul of man has no answering function save the passive acceptance of morals in the form turned out by ratiocination. The Great Preacher was free from this pedantry. He presented morality as concrete and living, leaving it to tell its own story and evoke its own reactions. "Without a *parable* spake he not unto them, according as it is written : I will declare things hidden from the foundation of the world."

## X

### THE GERMAN MACHINE

AT a moment when the war and its attendant circumstances usurp the field of vision as the one fact of outstanding significance, I do not see how it is possible to avoid the conclusion that for a long time past the minds of men have been moving on a wrong track. There is an indication of something *radically* wrong: not of an error which affects this or that phase of civilisation, but rather of a general misdirection of the human spirit. The very least to be said is that a culture which has yielded *this* as its outcome, or at all events has not prevented this, can no longer claim to be sacrosanct. Root as well as branch, it stands under suspicion, if not under actual discredit.

The war is the most significant object-lesson that has ever challenged the attention of mankind, and it may well be that the fate of civilisation for centuries to come hangs upon our present ability to read the lesson aright.

I am well aware that many students will give a rendering very different from that

suggested in these essays. They may even refuse to admit that our culture is mechanical at all; or, if this be passed, they will criticise the present construction of the machine, point out its imperfections, and suggest that when these are remedied organisation will be perfect and all will be well. What civilisation needs, in this estimate, is not less machinery but better machinery; and by better they mean more scientific in construction, more closely adapted to those ultimate rules of thought by which spiritual mechanism is governed.

But if that be all, shall we not be forced to admit that the leader of the civilised world is the nation which has the best machinery at the present moment? That nation is Germany. The difference between the much-discussed culture of Germany and that which prevails in other quarters is mainly one of superior mechanism. The Germans have worked out to its further consequences a philosophy of life dominant, though less tyrannous, in all the nations which have shared the intellectual development of the last three centuries. A principle which is elsewhere mixed and retarded by other tendencies is there completely master. Whatever judgment we pass on the fruits of culture as we see them in Germany is therefore the judgment which, in all probability, the world will one day pass on ourselves if we follow the line on which the Germans give the lead.



Meanwhile we may consider certain facts and let them speak for themselves. Germany is, and has long been, the great head-centre of the critical movement in all its departments. She has turned her critical faculty on the problems of society, and has developed an industrial and military organisation which for theoretical completeness is without a rival. She has created a social machine which can be set working by the pressure of a button ; but through her constant oversight of the human element she has left the button at the mercy of the most dangerous element in the State. Nowhere else, again, is education so systematised and energetic ; but the system is one which impresses itself bodily on the receiving mind and leaves the smallest possible scope for the free action of the pupil. While there is no nation which thinks *so much* as the German, there are many which enjoy more freedom of thought. Her thought is standardised, and the expert controls its direction throughout an immense variety of products. Once the most creative of nations, she has now become the least. Her originality is mainly of one kind : she makes new departures in criticism and invents, or borrows, new machines, social, industrial, military, philosophical, and religious. Nowhere else is psychology so much studied, and human nature so little understood. Whereas God made man capable of several kinds of intelligence, Germany excels in only

one—that of thoroughgoing submission to the method of analysis. Within the limits of this method she forges ahead of all other nations ; outside those limits she contributes to civilisation little which civilisation does not already possess. Her national conduct provides no new example and her national aspirations reveal no new ideal. All that she is teaching in these respects the world learnt long ago—from Sennacherib, from Gengiz Khan, from Machiavelli, and from Mephistopheles. The breath of heaven rarely stirs her philosophy. As for Nietzsche, it is no exaggeration to say that many of his doctrines were well known in the Neolithic Age ; and there is no nuisance more ancient than the superman.

The German output of theology and Biblical criticism leaves other nations hopelessly in the rear. She has introduced more theoretical improvements into Christianity than all the rest of the world combined. She has reduced Christian doctrine to its purest essence. She has analysed Christian ethics, penetrated to the ultimate sources of moral law, and invented innumerable systems of morality. She has indulged herself in a veritable orgy of theoretical idealisms. But she has broken her plighted word to Belgium, sacked Belgian cities, massacred their inhabitants, and lost her sense of right and wrong. And her philosophers, theologians, and Biblical critics defend what she has done, thereby proclaiming to the

world that her soul is the servant and not the master of the mighty mechanism she has called into being.

Surely there is some justification for believing that the way of civilisation lies *round* and not *through* that point of advance at which Germany now stands. She stands there as a warning to the world.

# XI

## MILITARISM AND INDUSTRIALISM

MILITARISM and industrialism, as they exist in Europe to-day, have their origin in a common source. Both illustrate the bent given to the human mind by the cult of mechanism, which has so long been dominant in the spiritual life of the Western world.

What are their actual relations in the working of civilisation? Are they antagonistic—the one making for war, the other for peace? Or do they reciprocally support each other and press forward together towards a common disaster?

On a superficial view we are tempted to describe the relation of industrialism to militarism as that of contraries. The two principles are simply opposed. Industrialism, we think, makes for peace; militarism for war. Whence follows the simple conclusion that the destruction of militarism will leave the peace-making principle in control of civilisation and fighting will be at an end.

This simple analysis seems to me far from adequate.

To begin with, there is the fact staring us in the face that an age which is saturated with industrialism has given birth to the most destructive war the world has ever seen. We have no need, at this point, to assert the disputable proposition that industrialism has caused the war. Let us content ourselves with the indisputable proposition that industrialism has not prevented the war.

If industrialism were essentially pacific, this failure to prevent the war would be hard to understand. As the dominant interest of nations and individuals, and as making always for peace, how has it come to pass, we may well ask, that industrialism has been unable to restrain the forces which make for war, and for war on the most stupendous scale? We have flattered ourselves that commerce, by multiplying and strengthening the ties between nations, would make it impossible for these to tear themselves asunder and engage in mutual destruction. The event has proved we were in error.

Reflecting more deeply on its failure to keep the peace, a suspicion gains ground that industrialism after all must be reckoned, in and for itself, among the positive causes of war. By increasing the wealth, the ostentation, and the pride of the peoples, does it not serve to accentuate their rivalries, to deepen

their jealousies, and to inflame their predatory passions? Is it not true that wherever great treasure-chests exist, there will robbers be found also; and is the treasure less provocative of covetousness when gained by commerce, than when extorted from the labour of slaves or exacted by the ransom of conquered cities? Are two nations, rich and happy in the sort of happiness that comes from riches, more likely to be friends than two poor nations each possessing nothing which tempts the cupidity of the other?

For example, is not one of the chief causes of the present hostility between Germany and Great Britain to be found in the fact that both of them, as we say, "have done so well in business"? Is it of no significance that war broke out at the very time when each was "doing better than ever"? Eliminate, from the complex of conditions out of which the war arose, the circumstance that industry had made both these nations rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and may we not say without hesitation that war between them would not have taken place?

What answer shall we give to these questions? Shall we, as before, take refuge in the argument that industrialism shows these baleful tendencies only because it is imperfectly developed, and has not yet become truly international in character? Shall we plead for a finer articulation of the commercial tie,

and for more industrialism rather than less? Will our dream of the millennium be the conversion of the whole human race into a Universal Joint Stock Company? Are we, in a word, to content ourselves with the suppression of militarism and trust the weal of the race to the working out of the industrial principle, unhampered by the interference of its military yoke-fellow?

Such answers show, I cannot help thinking, that we are legislating for mankind without reckoning with man, as we so often fail to do. They leave untouched the tap-root of war—that primitive instinct which the old legislation sought to restrain by the command, “Thou shalt not covet.”

To make this clear let us assume the extreme case and suppose that on the conclusion of the war the nations of Europe, convinced of their folly and wickedness, abandon every form of armament and determine for the future to spend not one farthing of the national wealth on armies or fortresses or fleets. What would follow?

The immediate result would be the liberation of an enormous amount of wealth hitherto set aside for military purposes. The greater part of this wealth would flow into industrial channels. It is fair to assume that industrialism would be the gainer annually to the extent of five hundred millions sterling and of a labour force represented by twenty millions of men.

This is a prospect that ought to make the mouths water of those who think that industrial wealth is the foundation of human good.

Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, the United States—to speak of no others—rich as they now are, would then grow enormously richer. The natural resources of the earth would be exploited to an extent of which the present economic development, vast as it is, affords no measure. The mere circumstance that each nation might pursue its gains undisturbed by the risk of aggression from the others would bring a vast accession of confidence, and therefore of efficiency, to the labour and capital employed. The total population of the earth would grow by leaps and bounds. And under any fairly equitable scheme of distribution there would be enough wealth in the world to render every member of the human race well-off.

But would there be *peace*?

Long before the pleasing process we have imagined could work itself out every one of the great communities would be torn to pieces by civil strife. This, I mean, is what would assuredly happen if we suppose the economic process to go on without some fundamental change in the ethos of mankind.

For the peace of nations depends only in part on the suppression of militarism. In yet larger measure it depends on the absence of disruptive tendencies in the nations themselves.



What these disruptive tendencies can do, or at least what they can threaten, was made sufficiently clear in Great Britain during the few months which preceded the outbreak of war. Nor were we alone in this danger. I need not enter into particulars, for the facts are well known. France, Germany, Austria, Russia—even the United States—were seething with discontent. I recall the remark made to me by an American statesman in 1912. Speaking of the prevalent social unrest he said, “We are on the eve of a greater crisis than that of our Civil War.”

Internal disruption is the inevitable fate of every nation whose ideal rests upon a purely industrial creed. The larger the scope for pure industrialism and the fewer the checks which hold it in restraint, the more rapidly do the disruptive tendencies gather head and the more destructive do they become. It is not the poorest nations which reveal the maximum of social discontent. It is the richest. And the prime cause of this does not lie in the sense of inequality between individuals who have more and individuals who have less; that, no doubt, is a cause, but secondary. The root evil is, that a community which makes wealth its object, and pursues it on the terms laid down by the economic machine, is living under conditions which satisfy nobody and against which all men are, by the higher human nature, born rebels. From this point

of view success in the economic enterprise is even worse for a nation than failure. The greater the accumulation of wealth the more does the fundamental servitude on which its production is based, for all concerned in the process, tend to irritate and exasperate the souls of men. Industrial communities are always more restless when trade is good than when trade is bad, as though the rottenness of the system could only be revealed by its triumph. Seldom, however, does the restless spirit penetrate to the true cause of the trouble. Unaware that the trouble comes from the original vice of the whole enterprise on which we are engaged, we throw upon our fellow-victims the blame for the common lot, thinking that, because these suffer less than ourselves, therefore they are responsible for our sufferings—like the emigrants in the sinking ship who in the blindness of their despair fell upon the first-class passengers and tore them to pieces.

In short, the common pursuit of wealth is not a *human* bond, as Carlyle was never tired of reminding us. It leads to the invention of schemes and machinery of every kind—material, political, and social; but, of itself, it can never lead to the vital organisation of mankind. Nay rather, in spite of all that has been said of its unifying tendency, we cannot doubt that its final working is to disintegrate the community. Seekers of buried treasure invariably quarrel among themselves, for reasons

which are manifest to a child. They may arrange the most equitable scheme for the division of the spoils, and seal their mutual loyalty with fearful oaths, but before the voyage is over the captain will be dangling at the yard-arm and the deck will be slippery with the blood of half the crew. Whether they sail under the Jolly Roger, or under the red ensign of industrial civilisation, makes less difference than is usually supposed. Whether the spoil be buried in a pirate's cavern or in the unexploited resources of the earth, its moral effects are much the same.

Nor must we overlook the fact, as we study the relations of the two principles, that the disruptive tendencies of pure industrialism have hitherto been largely held in check by militarism itself. There can hardly be a doubt that for many years past the common fear of foreign aggression and the common need of being prepared for it have played a very considerable part, against contrary forces working from within, in maintaining the cohesion of every one of the States now at war. And if the question were raised, in which of the great communities of the modern world have the signs of economic disturbance been most abundant, should we not have to point to that country which is at once the wealthiest and the least menaced by foreign war, and where all classes have the largest share of this world's goods—the United States?

Militarism is thus the Satan whom Europe has employed to cast Satan out ; and militarism must go. But let us be under no illusion as to the sequel. When militarism goes, a check will be removed which has so far prevented industrialism from producing its bitterest fruits. If, therefore, the war merely yields the negative result of destroying militarism, we may lay our account with the certainty that there are yet greater troubles in store for the world.

But there is ground for hope in the very magnitude of the present calamity. All the nations involved in the struggle are learning the same lesson *at the same time*. All are engaged *together* in the bitter but salutary process of discovering their souls. A piecemeal repentance of the nations, following a series of partial conflicts, might effect very little ; a simultaneous repentance, imposed by a world-war, may effect a great deal.

Whatever new wisdom, whatever vision of the weak spot in civilisation, is coming to ourselves as a result of the war, we may be very sure that the same wisdom, the same vision, is coming to our enemies. Realising this, may we not believe that beneath the fierce and cruel oppositions of the hour a profound principle of unity is at work ?

## XII

### A DRIFTING CIVILISATION

THE drifting of civilisation is no new discovery, least of all is it a discovery of the present writer's. Now and for a long time past multitudes of thoughtful persons have been dimly conscious, amid all the talk and the clatter that were going on, that the course of events was in the sweep of invisible world currents: and there have been some, like Carlyle and Ruskin, who warned us in unmistakable language that industrial civilisation was shooting the rapids. I catch an echo of the same thought in some remarks made by Lord Bryce not long ago in his presidential address to the British Academy, in which he throws out the suggestion, prompted by the present war, that modern States have grown so big as to be virtually unmanageable by existing means of human control.

But in this matter it is needless to quote authorities, for we can easily make our own observations. If we take the history of the last hundred years and mark the important

points of arrival reached in the march of progress, we shall find that at the end of each long interval civilisation has always been somewhere where, at the beginning, it did not expect to be, and has in consequence waked up with a shock of surprise to find itself where it was. From moment to moment, from year to year, the shock was not felt ; but a generation has usually been enough to make civilisation rub its eyes and stare about in wonder and bewilderment at its new surroundings. The image that rises before the mind is that of a sleepy traveller suddenly roused by a jolt of the carriage, which has possibly thrown him into the middle of the road, and calling upon gods and men to tell him where he is. At the present day there is a vast literature to which theologians, philosophers, playwrights, novelists, and even sociologists make frequent contributions—a literature to which I am myself making a small contribution at the present moment, which can only be described as the literature of "*Where are we?*" Needless to say, the utmost divergence of opinion exists as to where we are. The only clear point that emerges from the welter of opinion is that we are somewhere where we never expected to be.

To this kind of speculation, which was always more or less popular, the present war has given an immense impetus. It has raised the question of "*Where are we?*" with a ven-

geance. It has caused many persons besides Lord Bryce to express a doubt as to the manageableness of modern States. May it not be, people are asking, that these great States, by reason of the enormous mass of their human contents, are liable to mass-movements, which are not properly controllable by any human agency whatsoever, either collective or individual? It is a new and interesting kind of scepticism forced upon men by reflecting on the mere bigness of those monstrous congregations of humanity which are covered—and so thinly covered—by such facile terms as the British Empire, Russia, Germany, the United States. It is possible that before long we may see the rise of a new criticism of the whole idea of government, based on recent experiences. Its tendency will be to eliminate a number of unmanageable propositions from the scope of human designs. It may not go the length of bringing us back to the cultivation of back gardens as the proper business of man; but I shall be much surprised if the next great movement of political thought is not in the direction of restricting rather than extending, of concentrating rather than spreading, the objects of social endeavour. At the moment, indeed, there are contrary indications also. The air just now is full of vast proposals, in which the names of great communities—Britain, Germany, Russia, and the rest—are moved about and manipulated

as though they were counters on a chequer-board.<sup>1</sup> But a deeper current of thought, which penetrates these thin abstractions and translates them into their human equivalents, is also at work. Already it is reminding us that by pressing our powers of control beyond their limits we have merely deepened the confusion of the world, and at the same time lost control on other matters which are properly within our scope. This deeper thought starts from the human end of the problem. Its first principle will be that industrial civilisation was made for man and not man for industrial civilisation.

My first example of a drifting civilisation has been mentioned before I was aware of it. It refers to the mere magnitude of society as measured in terms of population. None of the great states of the modern world has delib-

<sup>1</sup> "If humanity is to progress, all the great civilised nations of the earth must agree to discuss together many matters now regarded as coming within the sole competence of the sovereign state; but each of them must assume responsibility for helping to maintain right, justice, and liberty throughout the entire world."—Article in *The Round Table* for December 1915.

This is a good example of the summary way we men propose to one another methods of control over the destinies of the entire human race. It looks well on paper, but—what does it mean? Is there any real sense in which the four hundred millions of the British Empire can "agree to discuss matters" with the one hundred and sixty millions of Russia; or, having discussed them, effectively pledge one another to abide by the results of the discussion?



erately created the enormous dimensions of its human content. None of these communities has controlled its own mass, volume, or momentum. The mass, if you look at it statically, the momentum, if you look at it dynamically, have come to be what they are by the operation of causes which work behind the back of kings, governments, statesmen, economists and reformers. Whatever else may be set down to the deliberate planning of legislators, this overarching fact of stupendous human magnitude, measured by figures the imagination cannot grasp—a fact which is the parent source of those mighty movements which determine the fate of the world, and may well cause Lord Bryce to doubt the manageableness of the modern State,—this at all events is the result of no policy, no forethought, no design. It has come to be what it is. It marks a condition into which civilisation has drifted.

My second example relates to material wealth, and this too has already received a passing allusion. Contemplate the wealth of industrial civilisation as one huge totality. Again you are confronted with something immense and almost unimaginable. As a mere magnitude the material wealth of the world has become a portent and an astonishment. But who has decreed its present proportions? To what form of the common will do these unimaginable figures correspond? Long ago civilisa-

tion made up its mind to get material riches. Granted: but when was the mind of man made up to get them on this stupendous scale?

We all know, from our study of individual men, that private fortunes, when they are very large, may become the masters of the men who possess them, compelling their owners to adopt modes of life which would never be adopted for their own sake. It is precisely the same with the wealth of nations. Growing without restraint, national wealth passes the limits of human control and itself becomes the master of the situation. It compels nations to adopt policies towards one another which would never be adopted for human reasons, and are indeed mad from the human point of view, but which have to be adopted in order to guard the immense treasures that are at stake. This, I submit, is the position in which the nations stand to-day; and, I add, it is a position into which they have drifted. No man or group of men has designed it. No man or group of men who retained possession of their senses ever would design it.

My third example refers to the growth of knowledge—the development of positive science; and here I must be content to give a bare hint, since to do more would lead me too far afield. We can study the growth of knowledge in two ways: we may take it piecemeal, step by step; or we can view it

comprehensively, in broad sweeps and masses. According as we take it in one way or the other we get different impressions. Taken piecemeal, we find that each step in the growth of knowledge has been undertaken with a definite purpose. Definite questions were asked and definite answers sought. Taken comprehensively, however, we get another result. We find the separate steps combining towards total issues which nobody foresaw or even dreamed of as possible. In the details of its progress there is nothing more sober or less romantic than the growth of knowledge. It seems to be under perfect control. But in the broad mass it is a record of unexpected and surprising combinations, which render it the greatest adventure, the most exciting drama, in the life of the ages. Not less amazing than the story of its growth is the story of its application. Discoveries made in one generation have been applied by the next for uses quite different from and often contrary to those they were intended to serve. Here also the conditions have been highly dramatic, and in one respect at all events the drama has taken the form of a tragedy. Science, always promoted as the instrument of human good, has been captured by the powers which work havoc, and now, as the handmaid of war, is spreading destruction on a scale which leaves in the shade all the previous calamities of the human race. This

also is a position into which the world has drifted. For though there have always been people who believed, not without reason, that war was an element in the education of mankind, no reasonable being could ever maintain that precisely this kind of war, with its immense apparatus of scientific cruelty, is the kind which best fulfils the educative purpose.

And now what is to be done? If it be true that the world has grown unmanageable, that knowledge and wealth and human society itself are utterly out of hand, does it not follow that there is an end to all endeavours after human betterment?

I think not. Nothing indeed can be done without immense difficulty, without many sacrifices, including the sacrifice of preconceptions, which is the most difficult of all. The simplest and easiest solution of the question will involve in practice a Herculean task. But we are made for such tasks, and they are not beyond the wit of man.

I conceive the possibility of a new social science which would invert the established order by attacking all its problems from the human instead of from the mechanical end. It would not despise the mechanical, but it would *begin* from the human. It would not be greatly bothered about the *world* or the management of the world, leaving this to "whatever gods there be": but it would give

will be rapid; and each catastrophe will be followed by another worse than the last.

Would the change I have indicated provide a remedy for the drift of civilisation? To that question I answer both no and yes. I answer no, because in one sense the drift requires no remedy. To suppose, as some idealists seem to do, that the present generation can draw up the programme of human destiny on this planet, and take measures for carrying it out, seems to me the most preposterous of illusions. Whether the destinies of the race are controlled by a higher power than ours I do not here discuss. For my own part I think they are. But under our control they certainly are not. And the beginning of wisdom is to recognise that it is even so.

But I also answer yes. What we have to dread is not the drift that carries us to our destiny, but the drift which carries us away from it. Upon that drift every community is embarked which has quantity for its guiding principle, and from that drift at all events we might be saved. With the ideal of quantity before us we are denying our nature as men, and it is in consequence of this denial that history has to record all its most cruel disappointments. Quality remains the only genuine human ideal; it is the connecting tissue which binds men together in stable, orderly, peaceful communities. As quantity is the source of unending strife, so quality is

the ground of all brotherly relations between man and man.

What the millennium will be, when it will be, none of us can tell. Of this only can we be sure—that if there is to be a millennium, quality and not quantity is the name of the road which leads us thitherward.

## XIII

### MASS-POLICY

A CLEAR distinction can be drawn between the policy which guides the total State, and the policy which guides the interest of its parts taken one by one. Every one of these latter might conceivably be under excellent management; but the interests of the State as a whole might yet be under no control whatsoever. For the State, as all reputable thinkers are now agreed, has an interest and a destiny of its own, which is quite other than the sum total of the separate interests and destinies of the various sections of which it is composed—such a sum total being indeed little else than an unthinkable absurdity. It follows that, whatever intelligent guidance may be devoted to each of the parts, taken one by one, this is no guarantee that the State as a whole is intelligently guided. In a great fleet it is not enough that every ship should be well handled; it is further necessary that the whole fleet should be under efficient command. The efficiency of the total com-

mand is not to be measured by "adding together" the separate efficiency of the various captains.

By mass-policy I mean the policy which guides the total State.

Between the enormous mass, volume, and momentum of a modern State containing fifty or a hundred million individuals and an oligarchic power represented by the wills of twenty or thirty men, the disparity seems preposterous--and so indeed it is. But when we think of such a State under democratic control, the disparity seems to vanish. Since the community is now *self*-governing, a perfect equivalence is established between government and governed, and, however vast the population may grow, the controlling power will grow in equal proportions. Democratic States, therefore, can never be too big for their rulers, for the rulers and the ruled are now one.

But this simple formula, implicit in so much of our political reasoning, is not supported by a study of democracy in being. A brief inquiry into the facts soon convinces us that only a small proportion of the political forces of a democracy is available for mass-policy. By far the greater part of these forces, sometimes the whole, is expended in sectional controversy within the State itself, in the conflict of rival interests, in the warfare of innumerable groups. It is the way of all democracies, or has been hitherto, to become



preoccupied with the necessary adjustment of their internal balance, with the result that, of the total political force or wisdom available, little is left over for the supreme necessities of imperial guidance. Adequate resources for a wise mass-policy may exist; but they are pre-empted by particular internal questions, like Home Rule or Tariff Reform or Labour Legislation, as these occur one by one: they are, in short, used up on other things. Much of this force is not strictly used at all, being simply nullified or held in check by mutual oppositions, and so may be struck out of the account so far as mass-policy is concerned.

This was, on the whole, the state of things in Great Britain before the outbreak of the Great War. What proportion of the intelligence of the British democracy was applied to the guidance of the Empire as such? Singularly little—not a tithe of that devoted to Home Rule or strike legislation. So scanty was the interest taken in the Empire, so little did the Empire arouse our political imagination, that, had there not been among us a virtual oligarchy—and I would add a devoted oligarchy—which looks after imperial concerns, they might conceivably have been left to take their course.

Another instance, hardly less impressive, is afforded by the United States at the present moment. In the American democracy the

various currents of opinion regarding the war, or the various interests it affects, have almost cancelled one another. Nothing could be further from the truth than the notion that American neutrality represents the massed wills of a hundred million citizens resolutely and unanimously determined to be neutral. It is really a negative condition, and would be better described as "neutralised" than as neutral, the President being the interpreter of a state of rest brought about by the action, at the same point, of opposing forces.

The state of rest thus brought about, in whatever country it exists, is, however, only apparent: for it is precisely when democratic States are thus brought to a standstill, through the neutralising action of inner oppositions, that they fall into the sweep of invisible world currents and drift into situations where they never wished nor expected to find themselves.

This also is the time when a Napoleon—if the State happens to be one which breeds that kind of man—gets his chance. The capture of an entire democracy by a single man would be an impossible feat if the whole people were attentive to the concerns of mass-policy. But this they seldom are; and therein lies an opportunity which astute ambition knows how to use. What a Napoleon has to capture is not the total force of the State, but only the feeble residuum which has escaped from the battlefield of internal controversy.

Under the most favourable circumstances the guiding force available for mass-policy under democratic government would be the will of a majority—but held in check by the will of a minority. It is true that in the exceptional case of war the minority, at least the greater part of it, usually withdraws its opposition, so that during the period of conflict the community acts, to all intents and purposes, as a unitary whole. But this state of things rarely arrives until war has actually broken out or is on the point of doing so ; the period prior to the outbreak, the period when a wise mass-policy is most essential, being often marked by exceptionally acute divisions. “ When the people wake up, the mischief is done.” A democracy which takes up its mass-policy only during war, but abandons the total State to drift in times of peace, is very far from having solved the weightiest of its problems. In no real sense is it self-governed. It drifts.

The conditions of majority rule, under which a portion of the nation's political intelligence is for the time being put out of commission, except as an opposing force, may work very well when the questions at issue are those of internal balance. But they may be wholly inadequate to meet the problems of mass-movement, especially when the mass has the enormous bulk and momentum of a modern State. As you cannot effectively make war, nor conduct it, by a majority of one, so neither

can you effectively keep the peace. The almost inevitable result is a mass-policy of "watchful waiting," which, strictly speaking, is not a policy at all, but only another name for yielding to the drift and observing, or not observing, whither it is taking you.

The American President is by no means a solitary exponent of this attitude. For a long time past it has been the normal attitude of the British Public to the British Empire. We might never have shaken it off had we not waked up one fine morning to find ourselves in the midst of a world-war. The war has shown us, and let us hope the lesson will never be forgotten, that the interests of great States are ultimately dependent on mass-movement; and that no adjustment of internal balance will render them secure so long as the whole mass is suffered to go adrift.

## XIV

### THE INFANT MORTALITY OF GOOD IDEAS

It is of course true that in human affairs the effectiveness of controlling power cannot be measured in purely quantitative terms. But this rule is misunderstood when we take it to mean that the fortunes of any principle, idea, or policy have no relation whatever to the number of people concerned in its application, or in its acceptance. The larger the community, the more numerous are the reactions by which the original form of thought is modified, the wider the scope for criticism, and the greater the likelihood that our ideas, instead of inciting to action, will become a mere battleground for the war of minds, in the protracted course of which the conditions will change or pass away which our proposals were originally intended to meet. Thus, as the mental environment widens, the greater risk do the moral forces run of modification in their character and of delay in their application.

Moreover, there are many saving truths in morals and politics, as well as in religion, which depend for success on their *simultaneous* acceptance by all, or nearly all, the people concerned in them. A piecemeal acceptance which permits of one group growing cold while another is growing hot and breaks up the concentrated pull of the truth into a succession of isolated pushes may be wholly ineffective for the end in view, even though every person in the community be ultimately converted. In all such cases a time-factor comes into play which has been too much overlooked by moralists, though obviously vital to the result. This time-factor becomes increasingly important with the growing size of communities. What the telegraph and the newspaper have done towards achieving a simultaneous presentation of ideas may then be undone by the delays of criticism, which becomes more active with every enlargement of the field addressed, and grows by what it feeds on. The mechanical agencies of civilisation give currency to our ideas without ensuring their acceptance, but rather the reverse. Hence it is that in vast communities conversion often goes on piecemeal, if it goes on at all, and an order of effects is produced quite different from what would be witnessed if the process of acceptance were less protracted.

For these reasons I can accept only with

great reserve views of modern life such as that expressed in the following passage: "Modern science has given us new power. It has marvellously increased our resources; it has multiplied in ways that stagger the imagination the wires that reach from one man to another, and created the machinery that for the first time has made it possible to mobilise all the resources of the nations and make millions of men act with the precision and effectiveness of one."<sup>1</sup> Modern science has doubtless made these things possible; but it has not brought them to pass. "The wires" that reach from man to man convey many currents besides those of common agreements, common resolutions, common ideals. They convey the currents of mutual rivalry and criticism, which, meeting at the centre, often produce paralysis and immobility.

A good instance of all this is afforded by the warning which Lord Roberts addressed to the nation before the war. Words more solemn, more pregnant, more veracious, were never uttered. Had the community been of the size recommended by Aristotle for democratic States—of such a size, namely, that all the citizens could listen together to the living voice of an orator—it is tolerably certain the nation would have rushed to arms on hearing the warning words of Lord Roberts.

<sup>1</sup> Professor William Adams Brown, *Hibbert Journal*, January 1916, p. 348.

As it was, the words were addressed to a nation so big, and so distracted by thousands of other interests, that no concentrated attention was paid to what was being said. The warning came to us in broken echoes; it was taken up and commented on piecemeal; not till months afterwards did many of us realise what had been said nor the reasons for saying it; by which time those who had been alarmed at first had got over their fears, while the critics had found ample leisure to demonstrate that the warning was all moonshine. The instance seems to me to illustrate very well how difficult it is in the vast communities of modern times to get a simultaneous hearing even for the most portentous of truths. The hearing you get is a hearing by sections; but this, even when favourable, and even when the sections ultimately comprise the whole community, does not produce the conditions out of which the most effective common action is likely to arise. Thus it comes to pass that by the time the ideas have taken root which might save the State from drifting, the drift, thanks to the time-factor, has already taken place. The opportunities for drift are further increased by the circumstance that every guiding principle, when offered to a vast community, has to be adjusted to a myriad divergent interests, and by the boundless discussion which takes place in consequence.

It is perhaps too commonly assumed that



the effect of free discussion is to bring about the improvement of good ideas and the destruction of bad ones. This no doubt is what would happen if all parties to the controversy were logical machines or even unbiassed seekers after truth. But where the numbers are so vast and the interests involved so various, it is very rarely possible to confine discussion to these favourable conditions. Oftener than not the disputants are simply rivals, whose object is not to improve each other's ideas, but to destroy them. The first and most furious effort is "to kill the bill," and only when this is proved fruitless does the spirit of destruction begin to make grudging terms with the spirit of improvement. A close examination of the shores of political history would reveal the wreckage of an enormous number of ideas which deserved a much better fate. The evidence of this is not easy to find, for dead ideas, like dead men, tell no tales. But we have only to watch the war of minds as it goes on in every current controversy to convince ourselves that free discussion on a great scale is fraught with destructive tendencies, to which truth stands exposed no less than error.

As I ponder my theme many of these untimely deaths occur to me, and I am strongly tempted to mention them. But I refrain, since to cite them might merely serve to revive the criticism which strangled them

in their birth. The theme can be endlessly illustrated by anyone who has a long memory, and is best illustrated in silence. But, apart from the concrete proof, there are evident reasons why a high rate of infant mortality among good ideas should characterise an age in which the critical spirit is rampant. The chills of its atmosphere are often cruel to the most promising of its children. These show their bright faces for a season, and lo, the wind of criticism passes over them and they are gone. They fatten the graveyards of thought. . . . Peace to their memories!

Emerson in a well-known couplet assures us that the heedless world has never lost one accent of the Holy Ghost. How, I wonder, did Emerson find that out?

## XV

### A SCRAP OF LOGIC

*(Frequently "torn up" of late)*

A. (1) War contributes to the progress of mankind.

(2) No actual war has ever contributed to the progress of mankind.

Both these propositions may be true.

Again :—

B. (1) War contributes nothing to the progress of mankind.

(2) Every actual war has contributed something to the progress of mankind.

Both these propositions may be true.

Consider either of these pairs, say the first, A. The two propositions seem to contradict each other. But they do not.

The two propositions refer to two different things. They have different subjects. The subject of the first is "war"; of the second "actual war." The two are not the same.

"War" in the first proposition means war

in general, war in the abstract, "pure" war, war as occurring in no particular place, at no particular time, on no particular scale, in no particular manner, and to no particular group of nations. But that is not actual war. Actual war occurs at *some* definite place, at *some* definite time, to *some* definite group of nations, and so on. Actual war is not "pure" war, but war mixed with special peculiarities of place, time, and personality, etc. No pure war, no war "in general" has ever occurred. The only wars that have ever occurred are particular wars, made "particular" by the special circumstances with which they are accompanied. The first proposition amounts to saying that war, if you could get it pure, would contribute to the progress of mankind. The second proposition may accept this; but it reminds us that we never yet have had pure war, but only impure; never war in the abstract, but only war in the concrete; and this it affirms has contributed nothing to the progress of mankind. The two propositions are not contradictory.

Suppose you believe that war contributes to the progress of mankind. This does not involve you in believing that war initiated by the German Kaiser in 1914 contributes to the progress of mankind; or that a war which includes the destruction of Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, and the sinking of the *Lusitania* contributes to the progress of mankind. You

may affirm the first and deny the second without the least inconsistency.

Or take the second pair of propositions. Here you begin by asserting that war contributes nothing to the progress of mankind, and then, as it seems, flatly contradict yourself by saying that every actual war (for example, that between the Greeks and Persians) has contributed something to the progress of mankind. But observe once more that the war between the Greeks and the Persians, which you say did good, is a very different thing from the war of the other proposition, which you say does no good. The first was war *plus* Pericles, the second is war *minus* Pericles—to mention only one of a thousand particulars present in the one case and absent in the other. Observe also that what you say of the one thing is that it *does* no good; what you say of the other is that it *did* good. There is no contradiction. You may hold them both without a trace of inconsistency.

Surely not, you answer. For how could I ever reach my first proposition that war in general does no good except by experience of particular wars taken one by one? If my experience of each particular war was that it did good, I should inevitably conclude that war in general did good, and the first proposition would be the contrary of what it is. You are supposing an impossible case.

I answer, no. Your first proposition that

war in general does no good is not founded on experience, for you never had an experience in general. A war in general has never occurred for anybody to experience. The only wars that have occurred have been, so to speak, mixed articles; you have had no experience of what the pure article can or cannot do. So far as experience goes you are at liberty to say what you like about war in general.

Or again, you may say, when I speak of war in general being bad, I mean war as it occurs in *all* places, at *all* times, to *all* persons, etc.

But what war ever did occur in *all* places, at *all* times, to *all* persons, etc.? Who has ever experienced such a war?

Since the outbreak of the great European conflict many writers have striven to show that war is wrong. Granted: but it does not follow that the *present* war is wrong. Many writers, also, have striven to show that war is right. Granted: but it does not follow that the *present* war is right. War and the present war are two different things.

Again. Many writers have proved that war is (or is not) compatible with Christianity. But nobody has proved that the *present* war is (or is not) compatible with Christianity.

Suppose you command your son to marry, and your son, who is an educated Englishman, obeys by marrying a Hottentot. Has he satisfied or has he disappointed you?

You may say he has done partly the one

thing and partly the other. By marrying he has satisfied you ; by marrying a Hottentot he has disappointed you. The satisfaction offsets the disappointment, and *vice versa*.

But is that true? Would it not be truer to say that your belief in marriage as good for your son, far from partly reconciling you to his union with a Hottentot woman, only intensifies your disappointment now that the marriage has turned out of the wrong kind. "Better," you will say, "that he had not married at all, than married a Hottentot. I have no satisfaction. I have nothing but disappointment."

Suppose now that Christ sanctioned war as good for the human race. His very sanction of war may only serve to measure his condemnation of the particular war which is now being waged.

## XVI

# THE WEALTH OF NATIONS AS A CAUSE OF WAR

WHAT is the cause of the terrible calamities which are now falling on the civilised world? Surely it lies in the fact that the economic development of mankind has outstripped the moral development. The nations of the world have grown richer without becoming wiser and juster in a corresponding degree. During the past fifty years the wealth of the world has gone ahead by leaps and bounds, while the morality of the world has moved only at a snail's pace.

Morality, by which I mean justice and wisdom, has not advanced, anywhere, in the degree that is needed to deal justly and wisely with the enormous accession of riches which has suddenly fallen to the lot of the human race. Material prosperity has taken the world unawares; morally the nations were unprepared for it; some of them made ready for war, but none of them made ready for the greater



dangers of peace. The nations have acquired all this wealth, but in the deepest sense they don't know what to do with it; they don't know how it ought to be handled; they don't know how to make it a blessing, or even how to prevent it from being a curse. This disparity between the moral and the economic development is the prime cause of our present trouble.

As things now are,—wealth advancing by leaps and bounds, justice and wisdom advancing at a snail's pace—rich nations are bound to be quarrelsome nations. They will be quarrelsome in various ways—in the first place, internally. Within the nation itself there will be class-war, the struggle between the poor and the rich, which may and probably would break out into armed civil strife unless the contending parties were restrained by their common fear of foreign aggression. These internal quarrels—at least the fiercest of them—are centred on the question of wealth, and they are most bitter in those countries where there is most wealth to be divided and quarrelled about. And the reasons for this are quite obvious. Wherever classes or individuals distrust one another, they will find means to pick a quarrel. Now mutual distrust always follows from the presence of ill-digested wealth in a community. The rich suspect the poor of having designs on their property. The poor suspect the rich of trying to oppress

them and take advantage of them. Whether these suspicions are well founded or not does not matter. They exist; neither party has confidence in the good faith of the other; and quarrels are bound to break out the moment a pretext is forthcoming.

Before the present war began all the wealthy nations of Europe were seething with this sort of strife. It was bitter in every one of them; but it was even more bitter in the United States, a country which is probably more wealthy than any other, and at the same time less exposed to the danger of foreign attack.

But while the internal quarrels are serious, more serious still are the external quarrels which are produced by the ill-digested wealth of nations. And here I will call your attention to an unquestionable fact. The present world-war is, in the main, a war between *rich* nations. It is not a war between nations who are fighting, like starving dogs, for the bare means of subsistence. With the exception of Serbia and Montenegro, who of course are not the principals, each of the belligerent powers possesses vast territories and vast accumulations of wealth. Every one of them is enormously rich. Unless they were, how could they wage war on its present scale?

I am going to suggest that the enormous wealth of these nations has something to do with the fact that they are at war and a great

deal to do with their being at war on the present stupendous scale.

My contention is that vast accumulations of national wealth, so far from inclining nations to live at peace with one another, have, in the present backward state of international morality, precisely the opposite effect. The possession of great riches acts upon nations in the same way that we sometimes see it act upon individuals. Instead of making them contented with what they have, it makes them covetous to get more. It gives rise to ambitions which have no limit and suffer no restraint. It provokes jealousy and arouses predatory instincts. A rich but vulgar-minded man, living in the society of men who are richer than himself, is apt to be jealous on that account. The fact that they have more than he has makes him determined to get more himself, possibly at their expense. So among nations. They may all be rich together, but if some are richer than others, then those that are less rich are apt to look with envy on those that are more rich; those that are more rich, on the other hand, will suspect that the less rich have designs on their possessions; and so will arise an atmosphere of hatred, envy, and suspicion which sooner or later is bound to issue in strife.

These are very simple and obvious truths. Just because they are so simple and obvious they are often overlooked.

To produce the state from which war arises

it is not necessary that every nation should envy every other. It is quite enough if there be one black sheep in the flock. The presence of one nation whose wealth has so operated on the national character as to make it envious of others and greedy for more will be enough to upset the peace of the world. The action of that one nation, and its known character, will breed a general sense of insecurity in the rest, will cause them to be on their guard and put them in the attitude which is ready to strike. And that attitude when it becomes general will give rise to new suspicions, to new competitions in armaments, and to all those dangerous suggestions of war which the mere existence of armaments never fails to produce.

This, as we all know to our cost, is precisely what has occurred. And precisely this was bound to occur, and is likely to occur again in a state of society whose moral development is so far behind its economic development as our own is at the present day. The wealth of nations, operating upon a backward morality, becomes a bone of contention, instead of being, as the thinkers of a past generation hoped it would be, the basis of peace. It provokes the cupidity, the envy, the boundless ambition of which war is the necessary sequel. It need not and does not provoke these passions everywhere; but it is certain to provoke them somewhere; and that is enough to derange the peaceable equilibrium of the world.

Industry appears at first sight to be a force opposed to war. Communities which are engaged in producing wealth look upon war as a fatal interruption of their work, and as a disastrous destruction of the fruit of their labours. Moreover, the nations which are engaged in commerce lose the aptitudes which make them efficient in war, and they acquire other aptitudes which make them inefficient. The desire for military glory is displaced by the desire for economic success and for the satisfactions it brings in its train. And in addition to all this, trade between nations tends to break down the barriers of race and geography, and sets up a network of international interests which act in favour of peace. All this is obvious and familiar.

Unfortunately this is not the end of the story. While it remains true that the actual *process* of producing wealth is one which works in favour of peace, it is none the less true that *the wealth when it is produced* becomes a cause acting in favour of war. The peaceful tendencies of the process of industry are undone by psychological effects which the material fruits of industry produce on an imperfectly developed type of human character. These effects are such that bitter strife is the almost inevitable consequence. The trouble breaks out from the human end.

Here we come to what seems to me the great defect in Herbert Spencer's treatment of

this question. Spencer thought that industry was going to drive war out of the world. His reasons for so thinking were simple. In the first place, he saw that industry had those peaceful tendencies which I have already mentioned. But over and above this, he pointed out that nations devoted to industry would be forced to abandon the centralised organisation which is essential to war. They would gradually find out that the centralised system was opposed to their interests as wealth-producers; that system would gradually be eaten into and destroyed, until at last these industrial communities, which had lost the taste for war in the meantime, would find themselves so decentralised that the carrying on of war would be in any event impossible. Thus in the end wars would cease automatically.

Spencer's words are these: "A long peace is likely to be accompanied by so vast an increase of manufacturing and commercial activity, with accompanying growth of appropriate political structures within each nation [he means decentralised institutions], and strengthening of those ties between nations which mutual dependence generates, that hostilities will be more and more resisted, and the organisation adapted for the carrying them on will decay."<sup>1</sup>

In Spencer's opinion, then, a long peace (he does not tell us how long) is all that industrial

<sup>1</sup> *Political Institutions*, p. 736.

communities need to cripple the machinery of war, and to deaden the desire for it, so that further conflicts will become impossible.

Now all this appears to be excellent reasoning, and incontrovertible so far as it goes. But unfortunately it stops short at the point where some tremendous forces come into operation of which Spencer takes no account. It describes with almost perfect truth the effect which the *process* of wealth-making has on the habits or characters of industrial nations. But it says nothing of the effects which come from the *wealth itself* after it has been produced. How the process of producing wealth acts on the character of nations, is one question, and this Spencer deals with ; how the wealth when produced reacts on the nations which have produced it, is another question, and this Spencer leaves out of the account.

It is as though you were studying the character of a man engaged in making his fortune by trade. You might conclude that the man, in order to succeed in business, must avoid quarrelsome habits, must consider his employés and customers, must conciliate the good opinion of other people, must learn to live and let live and maintain a generally pacific attitude to his fellow-men, and so on. I suppose that Dr Johnson was thinking of all this when he said to Boswell, "Sir, a man is seldom so innocently employed as when he is engaged in making money."

But it is obvious that we must not stop here. We must ask further, "What will be the effects on the man of his money after he has made it?" The process of earning ten thousand pounds by industry may conceivably be a very wholesome discipline. But the possession of the fortune, when earned, may have consequences of a very different order. It may fill the man with pride and ostentation; it may turn him into an offensive snob; it may give him a swelled head. And instead of leaving him contented with what he has got, it may only provoke his desire to get more.

Or a worse thing still may happen. His wealth may fill him with constant dread lest it be lost or stolen. He may fall into a habit of suspecting that everybody has designs on his fortune, and all those good conciliatory habits which he acquired while earning his money will be replaced by bad suspicious habits, leading him to keep a loaded revolver under his pillow and a fierce dog at his garden gate.

All this applies closely to the question before us. Admitting the truth of all that can be said about industrialism as a peace-making *process*, we have still to inquire into the after-effects on the nations of that which industry produces. Industry produces vast accumulations of material wealth. It has made the nations of the West rich in a degree which staggers the imagination. What is the



effect of those riches? Does their possession make the nations pacific in their relations with one another? Does it tend to the elimination of jealousy? Does it produce a sense of security and mutual trust among the peoples of Europe? Does it lead us to abandon our armaments? Does it involve the downfall of that centralised system of government which is needed for the carrying on of war? And if by chance war break out, does it shorten the period of conflict, and tend to keep the area within narrow limits, and render the conduct of operations less bloody, less cruel? Does it mitigate the passions of hatred or the desire for revenge? Alas, we know that it does none of these things, but the very opposite.

In all our studies of the question of war and peace, let us bear in mind the distinction I have drawn between the social effects of the process of industry, and the social effect of that which industry produces — national wealth. The distinction appears to me vital. While admitting, with certain reservations, that the industrial *process* is on the whole pacific, we may yet find that the *fruit* of the process is the prime cause of war. When the need arises, as it does arise, of guarding the fruits of industry against the predatory designs of other nations, or when the fear exists, as it does exist, that such designs are in preparation, then it is that these industrial communities are driven, in spite of their own interests, to revert

to the military type of organisation, thereby losing to militarism all that they have gained by industrialism. Thus industrialism, instead of destroying militarism, may lead to its establishment on a firmer basis than ever.

But I must add that in speaking of industrialism, I am thinking of it as it is now understood and carried on. That is to say, I am thinking of that kind of industry whose sole object is the production of the largest amount of material wealth—broadly speaking, the industry of the modern world. The last fruit of that kind is not peace, but war—war produced by the passions to which the possession of mere material wealth inevitably gives rise.

But there is another kind of industry whose final object is not material wealth but the joy of the worker. There is a kind of industry which is its own reward. It was that kind that built the Cathedral of Rheims—the kind that creates beautiful and precious things. There is remarkably little of it in the world at present. But I am hoping—I cannot say I am as yet convinced—that the present war, by demonstrating the utter futility of the kind of industrialism so long in vogue, will give that other and better kind a chance and an opportunity such as it has not had for three hundred years. It seems as if the age of mechanism, the age in which we have lived so long, the age which the future will look

back upon as one of the dreariest and saddest in the history of the world, were being burned out and destroyed. If this conflagration does not destroy it, then there must be another. For till it is gone there will be no rest, no peace, for man.

So long as the world is committed to that kind of industrialism which seeks satisfaction in the possession of material wealth, and devotes its main energies to the creation of that wealth, I see no prospect of peace. The root of strife will remain uncut, and militarism will continue to feed itself on the fruits of industry. There will, no doubt, be long intervals of peace, during which industry will pile up its fruits; but only to find that it has been providing the commissariat for future wars. I place my hope in the gradual opening up to man of other satisfactions than those which attend the possession of material wealth. Difficult as this may seem of realisation, I cannot but believe that the present war will leave our material industrialism so shattered and discredited, that men and nations will be willing to entertain other objects of endeavour than the mere creation of material wealth. At least they will be more willing than they have been hitherto.

## XVII

### THE WARFARE OF IDEALS

WERE a god to appear in our midst and make a valid offer to confer upon society, to-morrow, any boon we chose to ask, what would be our answer?

If no time were given for reflection the answer would be a Babel of outcries such as the world has not heard since the first confusion of tongues. A mere enumeration of our demands would fill the remaining pages of this book. Enough that the Pope at one end would ask for the conversion of society to his religion, while somebody else at the other would be content with a universal diet of fruit and nuts. One useful purpose at least would be served by the experiment—that of revealing the endless diversity of human ideals. Baulked, bewildered, and discomfited, the benevolent god would at last retire and betake himself, perhaps, to some more unanimous planet.

But if we were wise, we should ask for time to reflect, informing the god, with suitable apologies, that as a race we know not, as yet,

what kind of a world we want to live in. The delay being granted, we should forthwith constitute ourselves into a Human Parliament, and proceed to formulate our request.

Some may think we should never agree. The offer of the god, and the certainty that he could make it good, would only deepen the present discord of our ideals and sharpen our differences. We should be tempted to fight one another for the right to formulate the world's request. Argument would fail to produce conviction, and there would be a general scrimmage. It would be a question of whose "Kultur" shall prevail: and how could that be settled except by arms? For, after all, is it not true that in the warfare of ideals, as this goes on under normal conditions, we are kept from coming to blows by the knowledge that none of them is *immediately* practicable? But with a god at hand, ready to do the bidding of that group of idealists which could assert its supremacy, a new bone of contention would be introduced into the world. Should we not fight one another for the first claim on his services? It is perhaps fortunate for us that the gods do not act in this manner. "Agree in your demands and they shall be fulfilled" would be a dangerous prelude to any covenant between gods and men. The effort to reach an agreement is often the beginning of strife—human nature being what it is.

And yet a different result is conceivable. Of the many combatants engaged in the warfare of ideals few have the courage to face the certainty that their dreams will be fulfilled tomorrow. Our confidence in legislating for the New Jerusalem is not unconnected with the knowledge that the New Jerusalem is immensely far off. The remoteness of the event permits a freedom to the wings of fancy which would be sadly curtailed if there were any prospect that we ourselves might have to live in the world we were re-creating. Most Utopias have been constructed in the interests of generations so distant from the age in which the constructors lived that the question "How would you like it yourself?" has seldom occurred. The remoteness of the fulfilment, coupled with its uncertainty (of which most dreamers are dimly aware), gives rise to an element of irresponsibility which is deeply characteristic of all our social idealisms. I wonder, for instance, what would happen if Mr H. G. Wells were suddenly endowed with power from on high to create society after any of the patterns he has laid down. Would he care to face the responsibility? Would he have the courage to issue the order forthwith for the appearance of his new world? I believe Mr H. G. Wells would hesitate. Most persons assuredly would wish him to do so, especially those of us who have constructed Utopias different from his. Nor would our

own courage be greater, if the power were given to us instead of to him. Doubts would occur to us which were never felt in the times of our powerlessness, in the times when there was no god at our elbow ready to fulfil our dreams. The effect would be profoundly sobering. All the fight would die out of us. We should feel a terror in the presence of that obedient god; we should run away from him, or at least beseech him to run away from us. We should remember the aged believer who, having informed the Powers of the kind of heaven that would please him, was carried by the angels to exactly such a place as he had desired, only to discover a little later on that he was not in heaven but in hell. In short, the responsibility would be too much for us.

If this be a true psychology, the proposal of the god would lead to results the precise opposite of those which the first view anticipates. Instead of intensifying the warfare of ideals, it would cause a general cooling-down of all idealisms. Confronted by the need of devising a change which could be effected tomorrow, and to which we should have to submit our own lives, we should conduct our deliberations with a degree of self-distrust unknown among us when we were legislating for a remote posterity. Instead of pushing ourselves to the front, we should press our rivals to make the first experiment. We should be anxious

to learn from one another. The Pope would make concessions. The advocate of fruit and nuts would see difficulties. The militarists would be less enamoured of war, and the pacifists of peace. The stalwarts of science would borrow phrases from the poets, and the poets would make terms with the metaphysicians. A godly fear, provoked by the presence of the god, would descend on the whole assembly. There would be no general *mêlée*. There would be no scramble of hot-headed competitors for the services of the god. And when at last agreement was reached (and the necessity of agreeing would assuredly bring this to pass) it would not take the form of a design for the New Jerusalem. It would be something far more modest. The Common Will is not extravagant.

The warfare of ideals is at its fiercest when ideals are treated as themes for argument and eloquence. It is a wordy, not a bloody, strife. It derives its fury less from the determination of the disputants to realise their dreams than from the desire of each to prove his fellow in the wrong. A being unacquainted with the ways of man would wonder at first whether the warfare of ideals belonged to the work or the play of the human race. He would probably conclude, and not without reason, that some of its most formidable manifestations were a kind of sport. He would be greatly impressed by the part which the interests of a



remote posterity play in the game—indeed, this would be the feature on which he would chiefly base his conclusion that a game was in question. But of all the games played by man, this, he would assuredly admit, is the most wholesome and the best. “It does not demoralise,” he would say; “on the contrary, it keeps these men in training for their *work*. Observe, also, how promptly they desist from the game when something definite has to be done.”

## XVIII

### AN AUDACIOUS SUPPOSITION

If you or I had been among the immediate disciples of Christ—that is the audacious supposition—how should we have viewed the course of action which was leading him to crucifixion on Calvary?

Should we not have viewed it as a calamitous mistake? Not knowing what we now know of the after-effects of that tragedy on the religion and morality of the world—and how could we have known them?—we should have concluded, as some did conclude, that the Master was beside himself. We should have exerted ourselves to the uttermost in dissuading him from the course on which he had embarked. “This,” we should have said to him (if we had had the courage), “is sheer madness. Your life is far too valuable to be exposed to the hazards you are running. To risk that life, as you are doing, is little short of a crime against your fellow-men. You cannot be spared. You are only thirty years of age, and for the next generation no man will be so

urgently needed as you will be. For God's sake have a care of yourself, or we shall lose you."

One of the strangest paradoxes of human life is that we will for those whom we love that which we would never have them will for themselves. Because I love my friend, I will his safety ; I would not that a hair of his head should be injured. But if my friend willed his own safety as ardently as I will it on his behalf, would he be my friend, would he be my hero ? Why, most of all, do I love him ? Because he despises the safety in which I would keep him ; because he exposes himself to the destruction from which I would guard him for ever. He is my brother, nay, the best beloved of my brethren, because, at this point, he will not suffer me to be his keeper. Suppose he suffered my desire to keep him, and yielded to my will in his behalf. Suppose he said, " You are right. Enlightened by you, I know my value. I perceive the loss the world would suffer if harm came to me. Henceforth I will take good care of myself—for your sakes." How would the answer affect us ? It would strike a chill into the heart. We should feel that in gaining our desire we had dishonoured the object of it. We should realise that we had willed for our friend that which, when he willed it for himself, deposed him from our reverence. We should understand also that the view we take of the Best, and the view

the Best takes of itself, are different. To us the Best is that which must be guarded, kept, preserved as long as possible. But the Best is not concerned with self-preservation. It allows itself in a recklessness which we, on its behalf, would forbid.

Philosophers meet this difficulty by pointing out that the safety I desire for my friend is not the last word of my will. They say I have a deeper will which consents to his sacrifice of himself—consents to it in face of my dread lest he should be sacrificed, in face of my desire to see him safe and sound through the long years; so that in the upshot my will and his are really at one.

I agree that I have this other will; I hear it calling to me at the very moment when I seem to be willing the exact opposite. There is a tremor in my tongue as I urge my friend to take care of himself. I am in two minds; I am partly on his side all the time. That temerity of his which outwardly I oppose, inwardly I approve and encourage. This inward current unquestionably exists.

But are not the philosophers forcing the pace a little when they say that this part of me, which secretly stands on the side of my friend at the very moment when I oppose him, is my *deeper, larger, completer* will? That it is *another* will I grant; that it opposes the first I grant also; but that it is *higher, deeper*, and has the right always to prevail is a less self-

evident proposition. How do I know that this is deeper than that? How do I know that my will for my hero's continuance and safety is less deep than my readiness that he should suffer and depart and be seen no more? Granted that one is deeper than the other, how can I tell which is which?

My will for my friend's preservation is not a thing of which I am ashamed. I could support it by a multitude of sound and respectable reasons. I could defend it on universal grounds. Indeed, if it came to a matter of argument, I rather think that the will which the philosophers name "deeper" would get the worst of it. How then can I be sure that it is the deeper of the two? And yet I am willing to face the doubt and run the risk. But why?

Moreover, I observe that even when this has been done, even when I have gone over to the side of my friend and consented to the temerity which may destroy him, the other will—the will for his safety and preservation—is not extinguished one whit. It continues to utter a solemn protest; it delivers an unremitting and most formidable attack on the position which the will alleged to be deeper has taken up. And when the end has come and I am standing by the pierced and wounded body of my friend, what sting of remorse is quite so horrible as that which springs from the thought, "I, if I had stood out a little longer, could have prevented that"? Such remorse refuses

to be stilled at the bidding of a philosophical theory.

Again, you tell me that the sacrifice of the noblest and the best is a necessary factor in the progress of the world. But how many victims does the world require? Is there no such thing as sacrificing too many? Are there no limits? Can self-sacrifice never be overdone? When millions have laid down their lives must the call go on for endless millions more? For what, then, did the first millions suffer? Is the world's demand for victims so elastic that it can be stretched indefinitely and applied indiscriminately? Does the number of victims required, and the number offered, tally to a man? May not my friend represent *one more than was necessary*? And are the right persons always selected? Granted that a man must die for the people: does it follow that among the thousands available my friend was the one and only man to die? Would not another life have paid the ransom as well or better? Granted that one must be taken and another left, does it follow that just *this* one ought to be taken and just *that* one ought to be left? Between the abstract truth that someone must suffer, and the concrete fact that my friend, and no other, has suffered, there is an immeasurable gulf. Do you suppose that by convincing me of the first you have reconciled me to the second? No, no!

The distinction between the will which is

deeper and the will which is less deep is not so transparently clear that one can say off-hand which is which. Has the will which cries, "*This* man at all events ought not to have been made the victim," no claim whatever to be considered the deeper?

Of the two wills within me, I find that the first, which decrees the safety of my friend, is far more argumentative and far more ingenious in the invention of reasons than is the second, which consents to his self-exposure to risk. The second will seems disinclined to reason why. And, turning to my friend, I find the same difference in him. When I ask him *why* he risks his life, a life so valuable to the world, he is strangely silent. Or he puts me off with brief dogmatic answers. "I can do no other" is virtually all he says. Then, turning back to myself, I find that this also is the attitude of my own "deeper" will. "I can do no other" than consent to the course he has taken. So that, after all, my friend's will and mine are at one.

The conclusion to which I am thus driven is that neither I nor my friend have decided this question for ourselves. It has been decided for us—by a Third Party. We have had little to say in the matter. That is why we said so little.

Whether this conclusion rests on Reason or Faith, frankly I know not. I can only bear witness that it exists.

## XIX

### THE SAME THEME AS THE LAST

LET us assume that some general feature of human life and history has been satisfactorily explained—that is, a good reason given why it should exist in a well-ordered universe. And since Pain is the general feature most frequently and most anxiously discussed, let Pain serve as our present example. Be it observed, however, that a multitude of other things would serve the purpose of our argument just as well—for instance, Joy, or even Life.

Some reason, some explanation, has been given, then, which reconciles us to the existence of Pain as a general feature of human life. We now know—so we assume—*why* the whole creation must groan and travail, and we are satisfied with the reason.

As theorists, as students of the nature of the world, our reason has received its answer, and we have no more questions to ask. But now let us change the point of view and



imagine ourselves no longer spectators of Pain but actual sufferers of it in some definite and particular form. Which is equivalent to saying, let us look at the matter from the human end.

You are, for example, the victim of some dreadful malady. Well, you have admitted that Pain is a necessary element of a well-ordered world. Accept your sufferings, therefore, with resignation.

What is your response? "True," you answer, "I have accepted the necessity of Pain, but I have never accepted the necessity of the particular pain I am now suffering. It is a pain in my head, and is both fierce and distressing. All the reasons which demand the existence of pain in a well-ordered universe would have been equally satisfied if the pain had been less distressing, and in my foot instead of my head. Why so much of it, and why just of this kind? Moreover, it so happens that the pain began when I was forty-five years of age—a peculiarly inconvenient time. I never agreed to *that*. All I agreed to was that pain must occur *sometime*. Its occurrence *now* is an additional fact which my theory does not account for. The theory would stand unaffected if the affliction had occurred ten years earlier, as I have good reasons for wishing it had. Why *now*? I may believe that cold baths are good and necessary for mankind. But this does not reconcile me to

a douche\* of cold water administered whenever you please. So pain, to fulfil its beneficent function, must not merely occur: it must occur at the moment when its occurrence is needed. How do I know that this is the moment? No. I am not reconciled to my pain. Nor shall I be, until you answer my question—why *now*?”

A more perplexing question will follow. “I agreed,” you will say, “that in a well-ordered universe there must be sufferers. But in so doing I assumed that the sufferers would be properly selected. I assumed that the right people would be chosen to suffer. How do I know that I am the right person? Surely the god would be a great bungler who issued a fiat that suffering must occur and then left chance to determine on whose head the suffering fell—a god satisfied with any victim whatsoever. Why *me*? Why not *you*? For anything I can see to the contrary, the requirements of a well-ordered universe would have been equally well fulfilled if you had been standing in my boots and I in yours. Once more, then, I refuse to be reconciled to my pain until you have proved to me that I am the right man.”

Looking at the matter, then, from the human end, we see that the doctrine of Pain as necessary in a well-ordered universe does not carry us very far towards reconciliation, unless we can be further assured that the pain is

administered in the right amount, in the right form, at the right time, and to the right persons. I am not aware that any philosophy has even given us that assurance.

I will imagine two worlds and compare them. In both worlds Pain shall be a necessity of moral progress, and in both Pain shall occur. In the first, Pain shall come in the wrong amount, in the wrong form, at the wrong time, and to the wrong persons. Result—no moral progress. In the second, Pain shall come in the right amount, in the right form, at the right time, to the right persons. Result—moral progress. Which world is ours?

To understand why the whole creation must groan is therefore not enough to reconcile us to the groaning that actually exists. We must be satisfied further that there is not one groan too many (or too few), not one pang of suffering too intense, not one mistake in the persons selected for groaning nor in the time allotted for their groans.

I said at the beginning that the argument applies not to Pain alone but to any general feature of life, even to life itself. Let us then, before concluding, try it on something else. I suggest "Freedom" for the experiment.

It has been shown by many thinkers that Freedom is a necessary constituent of a moral universe. The only possible moral world is a world of free individuals.

To this argument I raise no objection. It appears to me indisputable. But when it has been accepted, what a vast question is that which opens out beyond!

There are ~~on~~ this planet, I believe, about two thousand million "free individuals." Why just so many? Suppose there had been half the number: not a word of the free-will argument would need to be changed. Suppose there had been double the number: not a word of the free-will argument would need to be changed. Why then is the number not half, nor double, but just what it is? Does it make no difference to a moral world, as it makes none to the theory, whether the planet harbours ten free individuals, or ten million, or two thousand million, or any number you please? Does the Moral Author of the world merely decree the existence of free individuals and leave the number of them to be determined as it may? I turn to the writings of Kant, the philosopher of Freedom, and find no word to throw a ray of light on this tremendous question.

Again. I see a reason why there must be free men in a moral world. But I see no reason why the free men in the moral world should be the particular individuals they are. If, for example, all the free individuals named in the London Post Office Directory were instantly wiped out of existence and as instantly replaced by a wholly different set of

people, you would have your free Lóndon all the same, and these new-comers might argue about freedom in the same terms as we do. The substitution of the one set for the other would leave the constitution of the moral world, as based on Freedom, exactly what you allege it now to be. But the wonderful thing is that *we* whose names stand in the Directory are here to man the moral world, and not anybody else. That is wholly unexplained. In short, you may explain human life in any terms you please—freedom, necessity, mechanism, spirit, matter—but what you can never succeed in making clear to me is why *I*, or, if you like, why John Smith, rather than anybody else, should be one of the individuals to possess the life thus explained. *I* am a surd in your theory. It does not require just *me*. It would be equally satisfied by Mr X, Mr Y, or Mr Z—gentlemen whose acquaintance the moral world has not had the privilege of making.

There is a strain of this thought, and perhaps more than a strain, in the writings of St Paul. St Paul had an admirable philosophy of history which made it clear to him that the first dispensation—that of the Law—was bound to exhaust itself in course of time and be replaced, at a particular turn in human affairs, by a second dispensation—that of Grace. He understood also that in order to set this new order afoot somebody must play the part of

its herald or ambassador. What he did not understand and never professed to explain was why the part of ambassador had been allotted to *him*, and not to anybody else. His theory required an ambassador, but it did not require that any particular man should be the ambassador: least of all did it require that the ambassador should be *himself*. Had the post fallen to Peter or to James, Paul's theory of history would still have held good, and that without the alteration of a word. But it had not fallen to Peter nor to James—but to Paul. Why *me*? was therefore his question. He could only answer, "By the grace of God I am what I am." And the answer was the foundation of St Paul's religion.

## XX

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE DEVIL

By the devil I mean the being who is at once the worst character in the universe and, of all bad characters, the most powerful. He could hardly be the first without also being the second. For if there were some character not quite so bad, but whose power was greater, such a being might outdo the devil in badness and so be worse than he.

The question now arises, Does the devil *know* that he is the worst character in the universe? Is he conscious of himself as the devil in that sense?

If you answer that question in the affirmative, you credit the devil with an exceptionally high degree of self-knowledge; and self-knowledge, according to Socrates, is the root of all virtue. It is a mistake to suppose that self-knowledge leads on to virtue only when it takes a flattering form, as when, looking at myself in the moral glass, I discover there

a good of a goodish man. It leads to virtue no matter whether the form be flattering or the reverse, so long as it be true. Supposing, then, that I am the worst man in the world, the self-knowledge that would make me a better man is precisely the knowledge that I am the worst. Or if, being the worst, I fancy myself one of the best, I have no true self-knowledge, and no good will come of the false self-knowledge I have. As a matter of fact, the self-knowledge held in highest repute for its reforming efficacy is the reverse of the flattering kind. It is the consciousness of sin. The people about whom we are most hopeful are those who see their own vices in their naked reality, and do not fancy themselves one whit better than they are. The people about whom we are least hopeful are those who know their own virtues only—which is flattering self-knowledge. To know one's own virtues only is most assuredly dangerous. To know one's own vices only is dangerous too, but less so than the other. At all events, if you had to do with a being who had vices only and no virtues, what better thing could you wish for him than that he should know the true state of his character, unpleasant though the knowledge be.

Observe, then, where we have now landed. In assuming that the devil knows he is the devil, that is, the worst character in the universe, we have put him at the starting-point



of moral reformation. We have made him a being after Socrates' own heart. We have assigned to him the highest achievement of moral insight. We have placed him in a position where he cannot remain; we have given him a character from which he is bound to recoil the moment he perceives it—unless indeed Socrates and his school be wholly at fault.

Ah but, you say, the devil is not like the rest of us. We, when we know ourselves as bad, don't like it. But the devil does like it, and that is what makes him so devilish. He not only knows himself for the worst character in the universe, but *enjoys* being that character. Self-knowledge, therefore, instead of making the devil better—as it does the rest of us,—only makes him worse.

This, it must be confessed, is a rather daring exception to the Socratic rule, and one which Socrates himself would not approve. But, Socrates or no Socrates, can the exception be made good on its own merits? Hardly. We are considering how the devil looks at the matter from his own point of view, which is evidently what we ought to do if the question be one of self-knowledge. And I say that the devil *cannot* at one and the same time enjoy being the person he knows himself to be and yet know that he is the worst person in the universe. That is psychologically impossible either for devils or men. Worst

he may be from our point of view, but he cannot be worst from his own so long as he is enjoying his self-knowledge. His enjoyment is the measure of his satisfaction with himself. So far as he enjoys being himself, he believes himself to be all right. The enjoyment and the belief are not two things: they are two expressions of the same thing.

Of course it is quite possible that the devil *calls himself* the devil. But then the name cannot mean to him what it means to us. To him it is a name of sweet odour. It betokens a fine sort of fellow, a vastly superior person who rates at its proper worth the humbug which men call virtue. Do you think the devil regards you and me as *better* people than himself? Not he. He regards us, and our like, as a pack of fools and hypocrites ill mannered and badly dressed. Has the devil horns, hoofs, and a spike at the end of his tail? From his point of view no "get-up" could be more becoming to a fine spirit—vastly better than all your top-hats, clerical collars, white ties, and lawn sleeves! He talks of us to his friends in much the same way as the Germans talk of the English. He is the only one, in his own view, who knows what's what in the way of morality. Why else does he aim at the domination of the world—like the Germans—and make his assault on the throne of God? He believes himself properly qualified for the post\*—the only person who is. Is it

likely that a being who knew himself as the worst character in the universe would ever propose that the universe should be ruled by him?

Far from assigning complete self-knowledge to the devil, we ought rather to adopt the hypothesis that he is under a monstrous illusion about his real character. That means that we must amend our definition of the devil. We must define him as the being whose self-knowledge has gone completely astray, whose mind is utterly darkened whenever the question arises of knowing himself. The worst character in the universe? Yes: but the worst *for precisely that reason*—the worst because he is fool enough to think himself the best. If only we could persuade him to see himself as he really is! If only we could persuade the Germans! Neither devil nor Germans would give us any more trouble.

But we have to remember that the devil is saying precisely the same about us. This is what makes him such a difficult person for philosophy to handle. Does anyone suppose that the devil is not clever enough to have a philosophy of his own? Of course he has, and a very well-argued philosophy too. It would be but a poor and inefficient devil who was no philosopher. He could not carry on for a day. He would go to pieces for lack of self-confidence—if for no other reason.

His philosophy is what makes him so formidable. It enables him to give us a Roland for an Oliver at every encounter. By as much as our philosophy condemns him, by just so much **his** condemns us. Who is to decide which is right—our philosophy or the devil's?

Perhaps the simplest way of meeting all these difficulties is to assume that there is no such being as the devil.

## XXI

### THE PEACEFULNESS OF BEING AT WAR

SINCE August 1914 our national life has been acquiring a unitary aim or purpose. The aim itself is warlike ; but it has been attended with some increase of mental peace. When war broke out we were living, as a nation, without any end or aim. We had our philosophers, of course, who instructed us that the "end" of the State was this or that ; but very few persons consciously adopted the philosopher's end as their own ; and those high-minded souls who did must have felt themselves somewhat lonely—must, at all events, have lacked the calmness and strength which come from realising that our neighbours are sharing our devotion to the common ideal. Whatever ideals existed had but a piecemeal acceptance : they waxed and waned, here to-day and gone to-morrow ; they were at war with one another, and their devotees were mostly unconscious of any deeper principle on which they could

unite. And beyond the relatively narrow circle where these ideals maintained their precarious dominion lay the vast dim populations, held together by "group instincts," by geographical conditions, and by the necessities of the economic struggle for existence. Regarded from the moral point of view, the scene was one of indescribable confusion: it was, in fact, a moral chaos.

Our "inner state," in consequence, was marked by profound unrest. I doubt if there ever was a time when in general the minds of Englishmen were so agitated as they were in the few years preceding the war. Rest for our souls was hardly to be found anywhere. In religion, in philosophy, in politics, we were all at sixes and sevens, fighting one another in the name of our ideals, or striving to rouse the lethargic masses who cared not a button for any of our idealisms; and often, it must be confessed, we were in a state of chronic irritation; and to make matters worse, a school of writers had arisen, represented by Mr Bernard Shaw, who made it their business to irritate and, incidentally, to confuse us still further.

I believe that the war has brought to England a peace of mind such as she has not possessed for generations. This statement, I should like to say, is not an experiment in paradox, but a sober statement of a psychological fact. It is, to some extent, a personal confession; but one which I should not dare

to make were there not abundant evidence of its being a common state of mind. In spite of all we have suffered and have still to suffer: the loss of our friends and kinsmen; the awful anxieties for those at the front; the knowledge of the immense miseries of the nations at war; the grave uncertainties of the future—in spite of this, and all else in the catalogue of evils, I am convinced that the mind of England is much calmer than it was before the war. To judge by my own observation, I would say further that the calmest people are precisely those who have suffered, or stand to suffer, most; or else they are the people, of whom the soldiers at the front are the chief, who are making the greatest exertions and facing the greatest sacrifices in the common cause. That element of “poise” in life, which Matthew Arnold valued so highly, has become an actual possession of millions in whom twelve months ago it was utterly lacking. One feels its presence—or perhaps only the beginning of its presence—in the social atmosphere, and in the faces and voices of men and women. It is pre-eminently the soldiers’ contribution to the new and better *ethos* of our time. “This life just *satisfies* me,” wrote a young officer from the front. “Up to the time I came out here I never quite felt that I was doing my proper job. But I feel it now.”

The feeling expressed in this officer’s letter is spreading and deepening all over the country.

It seems a strange phenomenon, one we could hardly have predicted in advance of its actual appearance, and to those who hear of it from afar perhaps incredible. And yet it is nothing more nor less than the peace of mind which comes to every man who, after tossing about among uncertainties and trying his hand at this and that, finds at last a mission, a cause to which he can devote himself body and soul. At last he has something to live for; and though the living may be hard and costly he makes no complaint; all that is well repaid by the harmony which comes from the unitary aim of his life. It is so with nations. Take, for example, the colossal expenditure of the nation's wealth. That we are spending well over a thousand millions per annum in financing the war is enough to appal anybody. But it does not appal us, for we know and approve the object of the expenditure, which is the defence of the liberties of our race. Is there anything better on which national wealth could be spent? Surely there is more ground for anxiety in the thought which forces itself upon us in time of peace that all this wealth we are accumulating in ever greater quantities has an unknown destination; that a thousand dangerous uses await it in the prevailing moral chaos. Better that the nation grow poor for a cause we can honour, than grow rich for an end that is unknown. Who can regard without deep misgiving the process of accumulating wealth



unaccompanied by a corresponding growth of knowledge as to the uses to which wealth must be applied? This is what we see in normal times, and the spectacle is profoundly disturbing. Far less disturbing at all events is that process of spending the wealth which we have now to witness. Certainly it does not alarm us to the extent one would have thought probable before the event. England spending her money, and knowing for what she spends it, has more peace of mind than England making her money, but in grave doubt and uncertainty as to the social and individual uses to which it will be put. I believe that England, at a time when she is spending five millions a day on the war, is not nearly so anxious about her wealth as she was in times of peace.

It is a literal fact that millions of men and women who were formerly "at a loose end" and living aimless lives have now discovered that they have a mission. The effect of this discovery is greatest, of course, upon the individuals who have made it; cases are known to the present writer which might be described as veritable conversions. But the whole temper of society is affected by the presence in its midst of so many people to whom a vocation has come at last, and the change is in the direction of mental steadiness and equilibrium. To that extent it may be claimed that we are happier than we were. The indi-

vidual is not more gloomy. He is brighter, more cheerful. He worries less about himself. He is a trifle more unselfish and correspondingly more agreeable as a companion or a neighbour. There is more repose in social intercourse than there was. The tone and substance of conversation are better. The type of person who is bored with himself and with the world is less frequently met with. People are glad to see one another, and eager to hear each other's thoughts. There is more health in our souls, and perhaps more in our bodies.

This feeling of being banded together, which comes over a great population in its hour of trial, is a wonderful thing. It produces a kind of exhilaration which goes far to offset the severity of the trial. The spirit of fellowship, with its attendant cheerfulness, is in the air. It is comparatively easy to love one's neighbour when we realise that he and we are common servants and common sufferers in the same cause. A deep breath of that spirit has passed into the life of England. No doubt the same thing has happened elsewhere.

## XXII

### ON A MUCH-NEGLECTED VIRTUE

IN an excellent handbook written for the use of students we read that Moral Science is the "doctrine of *ends*." This, to be sure, is an ancient saying; but it strikes a modern note. The word "ends" throws the mind into the future; and the future is that part of time which the modern man finds most interesting.

Whenever we are told that morals have to do with an "end," we are tempted to ask "Which?" For every process which takes place in time has *two* ends—the starting-point and the goal.

The writer of the text-book aforesaid holds a doctrine, borrowed from German metaphysics, which evades rather than answers our question. The "end" of everything, he tells us, is present in its beginning, and the beginning is only more fully revealed in the end. Thus morality in being the science of ends is

also the science of beginnings. We kill both birds with one stone.

But do we? The road which leads from London to Edinburgh is doubtless the same road as that which leads from Edinburgh to London; but this does not solve the problem of finding your way from the one place to the other. It merely informs you that *after* you have found the way you have only to retrace your steps to get back to the place from which you started. Moreover, though the road is the same, the experience of travelling in the one direction is very different from that of travelling in the other. The one journey may be both pleasant and profitable; the other may be neither. The one may lead to good results, the other to bad.

Our philosopher will doubtless tell us to combine both procedures. But this does not get over our initial difficulty. We cannot take both journeys at the same time. One must be taken first, the other afterwards. We may take both journeys, indeed; but our resultant morality will be different according as the one or the other gives us our first impressions of the road, and of the world which the road intersects. Besides, the result of "combining our procedure" may be widely different from what our philosopher expects. He is apt to assume that we shall gain thereby a double share of wisdom. or at least that our wisdom will be enriched. But this does not

follow. The impressions of the world gained on the first journey may be undone when the route is reversed. Instead of reinforcing one another, the two sets of impressions may cancel one another or, at all events, jostle. The process of addition, when applied to the things of the spirit, often resolves itself into a process of subtraction. Thus the study of history may convert a man's mind. The study of German metaphysics may also convert a man's mind. But the combination of history and German metaphysics does not necessarily convert his mind twice over, nor give his conversion a double guarantee. The metaphysics may render the history meaningless, and the history may render the metaphysics absurd. In the same way a man may become wise by reading any one of the "hundred best books." But it does not follow that he would become a hundred times as wise by reading the whole lot. Each book is instructive when studied alone; but the effect\* of studying them *all* may be that each will tend to neutralise the rest, and the result, so far as wisdom is concerned, may be nothing.

There is, however, another and more popular form of this doctrine of "ends," which has no concern whatever with the past. The "end" which it proposes to our thought is exclusively in the future. The eye is fixed on a "far-off divine event." Now, "divine events" may be

far-off in two directions. Some, no doubt, await us in the distant future. But others are far-off in the past. One of them happened when the morning stars first sang together—a very long time ago; another when philosophy was born on the shores of the Ægean; another when Europe, awaking from the sleep of the Dark Ages, built the Cathedral of Rheims; another when Columbus sailed into the West; and so on, till you come to those divine events which are so near our own day that some people cannot believe they are divine at all. Why divine events should be always *far-off* in either direction has never been explained. Why those that are far-off should always be so in one direction only—the future—has never been explained. And yet there can be little doubt that the doctrine of “ends,” in its popular form, adopts that belief.

The President of the United States, in a recent address, said: “I call all forward-looking men to my side”; and the American Ambassador to Great Britain says of this phrase that it “roused the whole country. No man in the Republic is willing to confess that he is a backward-looking man. The prodigious educational effort (of the United States) all looks to the future—millions of money and the best efforts of the best men are all spent on making to-morrow better than yesterday.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lecture at the Royal Institution, by Mr Walter Hines Page, on “Some Aspects of American Democracy,” 1914.

This is the doctrine of "ends" translated into the language of every day. There are two popular hymns, one of American, the other of British origin, which celebrate the same thought. The first (which, by a strange irony, was once attributed to Emerson) begins with the verse:—

"All before us lies the way,  
Give the past unto the wind;  
All before us is the day,  
Night and darkness are behind."

The second begins:—

"Forward! be our watchword,  
Not a look behind."

These two hymns, sung to rollicking tunes, are redolent of the eschatological spirit in its popular form.

I am inclined to think that our philosophic moralists, though they know better, are the allies of that spirit. One proof is that you may read many works on morality without finding *gratitude*, which is a backward-looking virtue, so much as mentioned. All the other virtues are discussed, but of gratitude there is not a word. Prudence takes account of coming days; Benevolence legislates for posterity; Justice prepares for an ideal world which is to be. Their "ends" are in the future. Those virtues seem to be singing the hymns which have just been quoted. They give the past unto the wind. "Forward!" is their watchword,

But Gratitude, with her eye fixed on the past, sits unnoticed among the ashes—the Cinderella of the virtues. And yet she has her rights.

## I

I have often thought that the nine lepers of the parable “who returned not to give thanks” are among the most modern types in the Bible. They would be among the first to respond to President Wilson’s stirring appeal: “I call all forward-looking men to my side.” They were forward-looking men of the pure breed. The prodigious educational efforts and the millions of money which Mr. Page tells us have been spent on cultivating the forward look in the United States have produced no models superior, in that kind, to the nine lepers. They were so intoxicated with the prospect of the new future suddenly opened by their restoration to health that they even forgot the past of five minutes ago. I see them marching off at a brisk pace, their backs to their Benefactor, and can almost hear them singing as they march:—

“Forward! be our watchword,  
Not a look behind.”

I will mention two examples of modern ingratitude. First, the people who are so pre-occupied with the evils of the world as to overlook the significance of there being any



world at all. They are all for the improvement of society, not pausing to consider the wonder of wonders—which is, that society exists. Indignation supplies them with motive power, and gratitude is far from their thoughts. But of these two tasks, which is the greater—that of the past, which created society, or that of the present, which undertakes its regeneration? To those who give the past to the wind this question seldom occurs. If it did occur they might be led to see that those very ideals of theirs, in the name of which they turn their backs on the past, are the legacy of the past. To the past they owe their problems *and the power to solve them*. Our discontents and the means of removing them; the resolution which turns our faces to the future; the vigour which carries us onward—all these have their roots in the past. If nothing but “night and darkness” lay behind us, we should have no eyes to see the way before us. We have eyes because the past was full of light.

Then come the theologians from whose teachings we gather that the world up to date is something of a failure; to be made good, however, by what the future has in store. It is characteristic of much modern theology to express faith in the future tense. It holds before us the promise of something which is going to eclipse all the previous works of the Lord. Matthew Arnold, who had his own way of loving the past, gives in to this tend-

ency by defining God as a being who "makes for" righteousness. "Come and see," says the new religion, "what God is *going* to do." "Come and see what God *hath done*," said the old. So the old religion expressed itself in Psalms, wherein the accomplished deeds of the Divine Majesty were held forth to gratitude and adoration; while the new runs to criticism, tempered with hope in a "far-off divine event."

To these "forward-looking men" gratitude, which looks backward, seems a useless virtue. Returning to give thanks is a mere matter of politeness, but otherwise a waste of time. An age which makes utility the test of all things claims a licence to be ungrateful.

## II

But is gratitude of no use? A general principle will guide us to the answer.

A man may have nine virtues; but, just because he lacks the tenth, each of the nine may have a narrow range and a low efficiency. Hence there is no more fallacious test of character than that which consists in the mere enumeration of "good points." One man may have a hundred "good points," and another only five; but if the five are well adapted to each other's company, the second man may be far more virtuous than the first. Virtues, if they are wrongly mixed, or lack

some pinch of saving salt, are sometimes hard to distinguish from vices, and the more of them there are the more do they tend to waste or degeneration from this cause. The *grouping* of the virtues, the affinities, which render some combinations effective, the repulsions which spoil others, the little vices which often sterilise the largest groups—all these are matters too much neglected by moralists. As everybody knows, goodness has more to do with the way we carry our virtues off than the number we possess. There are some groups which cannot be carried off at all, because they are either too big, or wrongly combined, or exposed to attacks from egotism, self-conceit, and ingratitude. Such combinations have no force as examples; they are more likely to cause a shudder. The Pharisee, for example, is morally overdressed, and we do not admire him; the noblest character wears a single undivided robe, and we fall at his feet. Gentlemanly vice I do not believe in, but ungentlemanly virtue is encountered every day. There is a point, indeed, at which morals return to their original meaning and become manners. How many excellent persons have spoilt their moral efficiency by the tone of voice in which they uttered the pronoun "I"! How many have failed as examples by possessing one virtue in excess of the number they were able to carry off! How many have lost their influence from

the opposite cause! A want of humour, for example, will often depress a generous equipment of virtue to a low level of practical value.

There are several qualities of this kind, seldom admitted to the rank of virtues, whose function it is, not to produce direct moral results of their own, but to raise the moral power of the recognised virtues, or at least to save them from losing what power they have. This function Matthew Arnold assigned to religion. But within the circle of the moral qualities themselves there are some, often the most neglected, whose value lies in the "touch of emotion" they give to the rest, thereby increasing their range, their depth, and their vigour. And of these gratitude seems to be the chief.

Gratitude means that memory has come to the aid of purpose, and that praise is reinforcing prayer. Gratitude links the past with the future, the debt incurred with the duty to be performed, the service received with the service to be rendered. The question, "What ought we to do for others?" cannot receive a proper answer until pains have been taken to weigh and value all that others have already done for us. Benevolence is largely an affair of memory and of the gratitude that memory inspires. The benevolence that is most beneficent does not begin, as some moralists seem to think, in a desire to do good to other

people, but in adequate recognition of the enormous amount of good which other people have already done to ourselves. Nine-tenths of what we have to give is a gift bestowed on us, and only when this is realised does altruism rest upon its proper ground, or feel the full force of the motives which impel the individual to the service of others. Divorced from gratitude, all the social virtues would shrivel. Nor could they sustain themselves for long in that withered and attenuated form.

### III

Is it a question of the service of the State? Then let us begin by considering the service the State has rendered, and is rendering, to ourselves. Here history must enlighten us. For the time being we must cease to be "forward-looking men." We must look backward, and see the State engaged through the centuries, and still engaged, in the task of enriching and enlarging the inheritance which has fallen to our lot, creating the values which now make life worth living. If we subtract from the "goods" which are ours all that has been thus conferred upon us by the labours of other men, we shall find next to nothing remains. Citizenship may have other bases, but I know of none which provides so firm and lasting a foundation as simple gratitude for what we have already

received. At all events, the man who is ungrateful to the past will give the future little cause for being grateful to himself.

If these views are sound, they suggest an answer to the question raised at the opening of the essay. Of the two "ends" which all morality involves, that end should be our starting-point where gratitude has its origin. We should begin with history, and not attempt eschatology, a far more difficult science, until the lessons of history have been well learnt. Before announcing what we are going to do for the future we must understand what the past has done for ourselves. Only thus can we compass either the knowledge on which to base our plans, or the motive which is to sustain us in carrying them out.

The great fault of the moral education under which most of us are being brought up is that it reverses the order of this procedure. Often, indeed, the first part is omitted altogether, the past being "given to the wind" bag and baggage. A little knowledge of the past, however, and, may I add, a little reverence for its achievements, would effect two beneficent and much-needed changes: it would reduce the number of disastrous social experiments which are mere repetitions of previous errors; and it would strengthen the motive to social reform. With all respect to President Wilson, I venture to think that "forward-looking men" are being allowed to have things a little

too much their own way. If some<sup>by</sup> modest portion of those millions of money, and of those prodigious educational efforts which the American Ambassador assures us are all looking to the future, could be expended on teaching people to look to the past, we might possibly see the rise of a more grateful and therefore a more efficient morality.

Just now, for example, do we not all feel the past beating in our veins? As we say good-bye to the brave boys going to the Front, does it not strengthen us to remember that they and we are helping to carry on the work of our fathers by which we ourselves have been so richly blessed? At such a time as this, what can we say of the man who is ungrateful to the past except that he is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils?

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